

RANDOM PD ENCYCLOPEDIA - T

TICKETS, PLEASE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *England, My England*, by D.H. Lawrence

There is in the Midlands a single-line tramway system which boldly leaves the county town and plunges off into the black, industrial countryside, up hill and down dale, through the long ugly villages of workmen's houses, over canals and railways, past churches perched high and nobly over the smoke and shadows, through stark, grimy cold little market-places, tilting away in a rush past cinemas and shops down to the hollow where the collieries are, then up again, past a little rural church, under the ash trees, on in a rush to the terminus, the last little ugly place of industry, the cold little town that shivers on the edge of the wild, gloomy country beyond. There the green and creamy coloured tram-car seems to pause and purr with curious satisfaction. But in a few minutes--the clock on the turret of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Shops gives the time--away it starts once more on the adventure. Again there are the reckless swoops downhill, bouncing the loops: again the chilly wait in the hill-top market-place: again the breathless slithering round the precipitous drop under the church: again the patient halts at the loops, waiting for the outcoming car: so on and on, for two long hours, till at last the city looms beyond the fat gas-works, the narrow factories draw near, we are in the sordid streets of the great town, once more we sidle to a standstill at our terminus, abashed by the great crimson and cream-coloured city cars, but still perky, jaunty, somewhat dare-devil, green as a jaunty sprig of parsley out of a black colliery garden.

To ride on these cars is always an adventure. Since we are in war-time, the drivers are men unfit for active service: cripples and hunchbacks. So they have the spirit of the devil in them. The ride becomes a steeple-chase. Hurray! we have leapt in a clear jump over the canal bridges--now for the four-lane corner. With a shriek and a trail of sparks we are clear again. To be sure, a tram often leaps the rails--but what matter! It sits in a ditch till other trams come to haul it out. It is quite common for a car, packed with one solid mass of living people, to come to a dead halt in the midst of unbroken blackness, the heart of nowhere on a dark night, and for the driver and the girl conductor to call, 'All get off--car's on fire!' Instead, however, of rushing out in a panic, the passengers stolidly reply: 'Get on--get on! We're not coming out. We're stopping where we are. Push on, George.' So till flames actually appear.

The reason for this reluctance to dismount is that the nights are howlingly cold, black, and windswept, and a car is a haven of refuge. From village to village the miners travel, for a change of cinema, of girl, of pub. The trams are desperately packed. Who is going to risk

himself in the black gulf outside, to wait perhaps an hour for another tram, then to see the forlorn notice 'Depot Only', because there is something wrong! Or to greet a unit of three bright cars all so tight with people that they sail past with a howl of derision. Trams that pass in the night.

This, the most dangerous tram-service in England, as the authorities themselves declare, with pride, is entirely conducted by girls, and driven by rash young men, a little crippled, or by delicate young men, who creep forward in terror. The girls are fearless young hussies. In their ugly blue uniform, skirts up to their knees, shapeless old peaked caps on their heads, they have all the _sang-froid_ of an old non-commissioned officer. With a tram packed with howling colliers, roaring hymns downstairs and a sort of antiphony of obscenities upstairs, the lasses are perfectly at their ease. They pounce on the youths who try to evade their ticket-machine. They push off the men at the end of their distance. They are not going to be done in the eye--not they. They fear nobody--and everybody fears them.

'Hello, Annie!'

'Hello, Ted!'

'Oh, mind my corn, Miss Stone. It's my belief you've got a heart of stone, for you've trod on it again.'

'You should keep it in your pocket,' replies Miss Stone, and she goes sturdily upstairs in her high boots.

'Tickets, please.'

She is peremptory, suspicious, and ready to hit first. She can hold her own against ten thousand. The step of that tram-car is her Thermopylae.

Therefore, there is a certain wild romance aboard these cars--and in the sturdy bosom of Annie herself. The time for soft romance is in the morning, between ten o'clock and one, when things are rather slack: that is, except market-day and Saturday. Thus Annie has time to look about her. Then she often hops off her car and into a shop where she has spied something, while the driver chats in the main road. There is very good feeling between the girls and the drivers. Are they not companions in peril, shipments aboard this careering vessel of a tram-car, for ever rocking on the waves of a stormy land?

Then, also, during the easy hours, the inspectors are most in evidence. For some reason, everybody employed in this tram-service is young: there are no grey heads. It would not do. Therefore the inspectors are of the right age, and one, the chief, is also good-looking. See him stand on a wet, gloomy morning, in his long oil-skin, his peaked cap well down over his eyes, waiting to board a car. His face is ruddy, his small brown moustache is weathered, he has a faint impudent smile. Fairly tall and agile, even in his waterproof, he springs aboard a car and greets Annie.

'Hello, Annie! Keeping the wet out?'

'Trying to.'

There are only two people in the car. Inspecting is soon over. Then for a long and impudent chat on the foot-board, a good, easy, twelve-mile chat.

The inspector's name is John Thomas Raynor--always called John Thomas, except sometimes, in malice, Cuddy. His face sets in fury when he is addressed, from a distance, with this abbreviation. There is considerable scandal about John Thomas in half a dozen villages. He flirts with the girl conductors in the morning, and walks out with them in the dark night, when they leave their tram-car at the depot. Of course, the girls quit the service frequently. Then he flirts and walks out with the newcomer: always providing she is sufficiently attractive, and that she will consent to walk. It is remarkable, however, that most of the girls are quite comely, they are all young, and this roving life aboard the car gives them a sailor's dash and recklessness. What matter how they behave when the ship is in port. Tomorrow they will be aboard again.

Annie, however, was something of a Tartar, and her sharp tongue had kept John Thomas at arm's length for many months. Perhaps, therefore, she liked him all the more: for he always came up smiling, with impudence. She watched him vanquish one girl, then another. She could tell by the movement of his mouth and eyes, when he flirted with her in the morning, that he had been walking out with this lass, or the other, the night before. A fine cock-of-the-walk he was. She could sum him up pretty well.

In this subtle antagonism they knew each other like old friends, they were as shrewd with one another almost as man and wife. But Annie had always kept him sufficiently at arm's length. Besides, she had a boy of her own.

The Statutes fair, however, came in November, at Bestwood. It happened that Annie had the Monday night off. It was a drizzling ugly night, yet she dressed herself up and went to the fair ground. She was alone, but she expected soon to find a pal of some sort.

The roundabouts were veering round and grinding out their music, the side shows were making as much commotion as possible. In the coco-nut shies there were no coco-nuts, but artificial war-time substitutes, which the lads declared were fastened into the irons. There was a sad decline in brilliance and luxury. None the less, the ground was muddy as ever, there was the same crush, the press of faces lighted up by the flares and the electric lights, the same smell of naphtha and a few fried potatoes, and of electricity.

Who should be the first to greet Miss Annie on the showground but John Thomas? He had a black overcoat buttoned up to his chin, and a tweed cap pulled down over his brows, his face between was ruddy and smiling and handy as ever. She knew so well the way his mouth moved.

She was very glad to have a 'boy'. To be at the Statutes without a fellow

was no fun. Instantly, like the gallant he was, he took her on the dragons, grim-toothed, round-about switchbacks. It was not nearly so exciting as a tram-car actually. But, then, to be seated in a shaking, green dragon, uplifted above the sea of bubble faces, careering in a rickety fashion in the lower heavens, whilst John Thomas leaned over her, his cigarette in his mouth, was after all the right style. She was a plump, quick, alive little creature. So she was quite excited and happy.

John Thomas made her stay on for the next round. And therefore she could hardly for shame repulse him when he put his arm round her and drew her a little nearer to him, in a very warm and cuddly manner. Besides, he was fairly discreet, he kept his movement as hidden as possible. She looked down, and saw that his red, clean hand was out of sight of the crowd. And they knew each other so well. So they warmed up to the fair.

After the dragons they went on the horses. John Thomas paid each time, so she could but be complaisant. He, of course, sat astride on the outer horse--named 'Black Bess'--and she sat sideways, towards him, on the inner horse--named 'Wildfire'. But of course John Thomas was not going to sit discreetly on 'Black Bess', holding the brass bar. Round they spun and heaved, in the light. And round he swung on his wooden steed, flinging one leg across her mount, and perilously tipping up and down, across the space, half lying back, laughing at her. He was perfectly happy; she was afraid her hat was on one side, but she was excited.

He threw quoits on a table, and won for her two large, pale-blue hat-pins. And then, hearing the noise of the cinemas, announcing another performance, they climbed the boards and went in.

Of course, during these performances pitch darkness falls from time to time, when the machine goes wrong. Then there is a wild whooping, and a loud smacking of simulated kisses. In these moments John Thomas drew Annie towards him. After all, he had a wonderfully warm, cosy way of holding a girl with his arm, he seemed to make such a nice fit. And, after all, it was pleasant to be so held: so very comforting and cosy and nice. He leaned over her and she felt his breath on her hair; she knew he wanted to kiss her on the lips. And, after all, he was so warm and she fitted in to him so softly. After all, she wanted him to touch her lips.

But the light sprang up; she also started electrically, and put her hat straight. He left his arm lying nonchalantly behind her. Well, it was fun, it was exciting to be at the Statutes with John Thomas.

When the cinema was over they went for a walk across the dark, damp fields. He had all the arts of love-making. He was especially good at holding a girl, when he sat with her on a stile in the black, drizzling darkness. He seemed to be holding her in space, against his own warmth and gratification. And his kisses were soft and slow and searching.

So Annie walked out with John Thomas, though she kept her own boy dangling in the distance. Some of the tram-girls chose to be huffy. But there, you must take things as you find them, in this life.

There was no mistake about it, Annie liked John Thomas a good deal. She felt so rich and warm in herself whenever he was near. And John Thomas really liked Annie, more than usual. The soft, melting way in which she could flow into a fellow, as if she melted into his very bones, was something rare and good. He fully appreciated this.

But with a developing acquaintance there began a developing intimacy. Annie wanted to consider him a person, a man; she wanted to take an intelligent interest in him, and to have an intelligent response. She did not want a mere nocturnal presence, which was what he was so far. And she prided herself that he could not leave her.

Here she made a mistake. John Thomas intended to remain a nocturnal presence; he had no idea of becoming an all-round individual to her. When she started to take an intelligent interest in him and his life and his character, he sheered off. He hated intelligent interest. And he knew that the only way to stop it was to avoid it. The possessive female was aroused in Annie. So he left her.

It is no use saying she was not surprised. She was at first startled, thrown out of her count. For she had been so very sure of holding him. For a while she was staggered, and everything became uncertain to her. Then she wept with fury, indignation, desolation, and misery. Then she had a spasm of despair. And then, when he came, still impudently, on to her car, still familiar, but letting her see by the movement of his head that he had gone away to somebody else for the time being, and was enjoying pastures new, then she determined to have her own back.

She had a very shrewd idea what girls John Thomas had taken out. She went to Nora Purdy. Nora was a tall, rather pale, but well-built girl, with beautiful yellow hair. She was rather secretive.

'Hey!' said Annie, accosting her; then softly, 'Who's John Thomas on with now?'

'I don't know,' said Nora.

'Why tha does,' said Annie, ironically lapsing into dialect. 'Tha knows as well as I do.'

'Well, I do, then,' said Nora. 'It isn't me, so don't bother.'

'It's Cissy Meakin, isn't it?'

'It is, for all I know.'

'Hasn't he got a face on him!' said Annie. 'I don't half like his cheek. I could knock him off the foot-board when he comes round at me.'

'He'll get dropped-on one of these days,' said Nora.

'Ay, he will, when somebody makes up their mind to drop it on him. I should like to see him taken down a peg or two, shouldn't you?'

'I shouldn't mind,' said Nora.

'You've got quite as much cause to as I have,' said Annie. 'But we'll drop on him one of these days, my girl. What? Don't you want to?'

'I don't mind,' said Nora.

But as a matter of fact, Nora was much more vindictive than Annie.

One by one Annie went the round of the old flames. It so happened that Cissy Meakin left the tramway service in quite a short time. Her mother made her leave. Then John Thomas was on the _qui-vive_. He cast his eyes over his old flock. And his eyes lighted on Annie. He thought she would be safe now. Besides, he liked her.

She arranged to walk home with him on Sunday night. It so happened that her car would be in the depot at half past nine: the last car would come in at 10.15. So John Thomas was to wait for her there.

At the depot the girls had a little waiting-room of their own. It was quite rough, but cosy, with a fire and an oven and a mirror, and table and wooden chairs. The half dozen girls who knew John Thomas only too well had arranged to take service this Sunday afternoon. So, as the cars began to come in, early, the girls dropped into the waiting-room. And instead of hurrying off home, they sat around the fire and had a cup of tea. Outside was the darkness and lawlessness of wartime.

John Thomas came on the car after Annie, at about a quarter to ten. He poked his head easily into the girls' waiting-room.

'Prayer-meeting?' he asked.

'Ay,' said Laura Sharp. 'Ladies only.'

'That's me!' said John Thomas. It was one of his favourite exclamations.

'Shut the door, boy,' said Muriel Baggaley.

'On which side of me?' said John Thomas.

'Which tha likes,' said Polly Birkin.

He had come in and closed the door behind him. The girls moved in their circle, to make a place for him near the fire. He took off his great-coat and pushed back his hat.

'Who handles the teapot?' he said.

Nora Purdy silently poured him out a cup of tea.

'Want a bit o' my bread and drippin'?' said Muriel Baggaley to him.

'Ay, give us a bit.'

And he began to eat his piece of bread.

'There's no place like home, girls,' he said.

They all looked at him as he uttered this piece of impudence. He seemed to be sunning himself in the presence of so many damsels.

'Especially if you're not afraid to go home in the dark,' said Laura Sharp.

'Me! By myself I am.'

They sat till they heard the last tram come in. In a few minutes Emma Houselay entered.

'Come on, my old duck!' cried Polly Birkin.

'It _is_ perishing,' said Emma, holding her fingers to the fire.

'But--I'm afraid to, go home in, the dark,' sang Laura Sharp, the tune having got into her mind.

'Who're you going with tonight, John Thomas?' asked Muriel Baggaley, coolly.

'Tonight?' said John Thomas. 'Oh, I'm going home by myself tonight--all on my lonely-O.'

'That's me!' said Nora Purdy, using his own ejaculation.

The girls laughed shrilly.

'Me as well, Nora,' said John Thomas.

'Don't know what you mean,' said Laura.

'Yes, I'm toddling,' said he, rising and reaching for his overcoat.

'Nay,' said Polly. 'We're all here waiting for you.'

'We've got to be up in good time in the morning,' he said, in the benevolent official manner.

They all laughed.

'Nay,' said Muriel. 'Don't leave us all lonely, John Thomas. Take one!'

'I'll take the lot, if you like,' he responded gallantly.

'That you won't either,' said Muriel, 'Two's company; seven's too much of a good thing.'

'Nay--take one,' said Laura. 'Fair and square, all above board, and say which.'

'Ay,' cried Annie, speaking for the first time. 'Pick, John Thomas; let's hear thee.'

'Nay,' he said. 'I'm going home quiet tonight. Feeling good, for once.'

'Whereabouts?' said Annie. 'Take a good 'un, then. But tha's got to take one of us!'

'Nay, how can I take one,' he said, laughing uneasily. 'I don't want to make enemies.'

'You'd only make _one_' said Annie.

'The chosen _one_,' added Laura.

'Oh, my! Who said girls!' exclaimed John Thomas, again turning, as if to escape. 'Well--good-night.'

'Nay, you've got to make your pick,' said Muriel. 'Turn your face to the wall, and say which one touches you. Go on--we shall only just touch your back--one of us. Go on--turn your face to the wall, and don't look, and say which one touches you.'

He was uneasy, mistrusting them. Yet he had not the courage to break away. They pushed him to a wall and stood him there with his face to it. Behind his back they all grimaced, tittering. He looked so comical. He looked around uneasily.

'Go on!' he cried.

'You're looking--you're looking!' they shouted.

He turned his head away. And suddenly, with a movement like a swift cat, Annie went forward and fetched him a box on the side of the head that sent his cap flying and himself staggering. He started round.

But at Annie's signal they all flew at him, slapping him, pinching him, pulling his hair, though more in fun than in spite or anger. He, however, saw red. His blue eyes flamed with strange fear as well as fury, and he butted through the girls to the door. It was locked. He wrenched at it. Roused, alert, the girls stood round and looked at him. He faced them, at bay. At that moment they were rather horrifying to him, as they stood in their short uniforms. He was distinctly afraid.

'Come on, John Thomas! Come on! Choose!' said Annie.

'What are you after? Open the door,' he said.

'We shan't--not till you've chosen!' said Muriel.

'Chosen what?' he said.

'Chosen the one you're going to marry,' she replied.

He hesitated a moment.

'Open the blasted door,' he said, 'and get back to your senses.' He spoke with official authority.

'You've got to choose!' cried the girls.

'Come on!' cried Annie, looking him in the eye.' Come on! Come on!'

He went forward, rather vaguely. She had taken off her belt, and swinging it, she fetched him a sharp blow over the head with the buckle end. He sprang and seized her. But immediately the other girls rushed upon him, pulling and tearing and beating him. Their blood was now thoroughly up. He was their sport now. They were going to have their own back, out of him. Strange, wild creatures, they hung on him and rushed at him to bear him down. His tunic was torn right up the back, Nora had hold at the back of his collar, and was actually strangling him. Luckily the button burst. He struggled in a wild frenzy of fury and terror, almost mad terror. His tunic was simply torn off his back, his shirt-sleeves were torn away, his arms were naked. The girls rushed at him, clenched their hands on him and pulled at him: or they rushed at him and pushed him, butted him with all their might: or they struck him wild blows. He ducked and cringed and struck sideways. They became more intense.

At last he was down. They rushed on him, kneeling on him. He had neither breath nor strength to move. His face was bleeding with a long scratch, his brow was bruised.

Annie knelt on him, the other girls knelt and hung on to him. Their faces were flushed, their hair wild, their eyes were all glittering strangely. He lay at last quite still, with face averted, as an animal lies when it is defeated and at the mercy of the captor. Sometimes his eye glanced back at the wild faces of the girls. His breast rose heavily, his wrists were torn.

'Now, then, my fellow!' gasped Annie at length. 'Now then--now--'

At the sound of her terrifying, cold triumph, he suddenly started to struggle as an animal might, but the girls threw themselves upon him with unnatural strength and power, forcing him down.

'Yes--now, then!' gasped Annie at length.

And there was a dead silence, in which the thud of heart-beating was to be heard. It was a suspense of pure silence in every soul.

'Now you know where you are,' said Annie.

The sight of his white, bare arm maddened the girls. He lay in a kind of trance of fear and antagonism. They felt themselves filled with supernatural strength.

Suddenly Polly started to laugh--to giggle wildly--helplessly--and Emma and Muriel joined in. But Annie and Nora and Laura remained the same, tense, watchful, with gleaming eyes. He winced away from these eyes.

'Yes,' said Annie, in a curious low tone, secret and deadly. 'Yes! You've got it now! You know what you've done, don't you? You know what you've done.'

He made no sound nor sign, but lay with bright, averted eyes, and averted, bleeding face.

'You ought to be _killed_, that's what you ought,' said Annie, tensely. 'You ought to be _killed_.' And there was a terrifying lust in her voice.

Polly was ceasing to laugh, and giving long-drawn Oh-h-hs and sighs as she came to herself.

'He's got to choose,' she said vaguely.

'Oh, yes, he has,' said Laura, with vindictive decision.

'Do you hear--do you hear?' said Annie. And with a sharp movement, that made him wince, she turned his face to her.

'Do you hear?' she repeated, shaking him.

But he was quite dumb. She fetched him a sharp slap on the face. He started, and his eyes widened. Then his face darkened with defiance, after all.

'Do you hear?' she repeated.

He only looked at her with hostile eyes.

'Speak!' she said, putting her face devilishly near his.

'What?' he said, almost overcome.

'You've got to _choose_!' she cried, as if it were some terrible menace, and as if it hurt her that she could not exact more.

'What?' he said, in fear.

'Choose your girl, Cuddy. You've got to choose her now. And you'll get your neck broken if you play any more of your tricks, my boy. You're settled now.'

There was a pause. Again he averted his face. He was cunning in his overthrow. He did not give in to them really--no, not if they tore him to

bits.

'All right, then,' he said, 'I choose Annie.' His voice was strange and full of malice. Annie let go of him as if he had been a hot coal.

'He's chosen Annie!' said the girls in chorus.

'Me!' cried Annie. She was still kneeling, but away from him. He was still lying prostrate, with averted face. The girls grouped uneasily around.

'Me!' repeated Annie, with a terrible bitter accent.

Then she got up, drawing away from him with strange disgust and bitterness.

'I wouldn't touch him,' she said.

But her face quivered with a kind of agony, she seemed as if she would fall. The other girls turned aside. He remained lying on the floor, with his torn clothes and bleeding, averted face.

'Oh, if he's chosen--' said Polly.

'I don't want him--he can choose again,' said Annie, with the same rather bitter hopelessness.

'Get up,' said Polly, lifting his shoulder. 'Get up.'

He rose slowly, a strange, ragged, dazed creature. The girls eyed him from a distance, curiously, furtively, dangerously.

'Who wants him?' cried Laura, roughly.

'Nobody,' they answered, with contempt. Yet each one of them waited for him to look at her, hoped he would look at her. All except Annie, and something was broken in her.

He, however, kept his face closed and averted from them all. There was a silence of the end. He picked up the torn pieces of his tunic, without knowing what to do with them. The girls stood about uneasily, flushed, panting, tidying their hair and their dress unconsciously, and watching him. He looked at none of them. He espied his cap in a corner, and went and picked it up. He put it on his head, and one of the girls burst into a shrill, hysteric laugh at the sight he presented. He, however, took no heed, but went straight to where his overcoat hung on a peg. The girls moved away from contact with him as if he had been an electric wire. He put on his coat and buttoned it down. Then he rolled his tunic-rags into a bundle, and stood before the locked door, dumbly.

'Open the door, somebody,' said Laura.

'Annie's got the key,' said one.

Annie silently offered the key to the girls. Nora unlocked the door.

'Tit for tat, old man,' she said. 'Show yourself a man, and don't bear a grudge.'

But without a word or sign he had opened the door and gone, his face closed, his head dropped.

'That'll learn him,' said Laura.

'Coddy!' said Nora.

'Shut up, for God's sake!' cried Annie fiercely, as if in torture.

'Well, I'm about ready to go, Polly. Look sharp!' said Muriel.

The girls were all anxious to be off. They were tidying themselves hurriedly, with mute, stupefied faces.

TRAINING IN EGYPT.

Project Gutenberg's *New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, by Major Fred Waite

The first troop train, with Divisional Headquarters on board, got away late in the afternoon, and pursued its way past old Lake Mareotis, with the little brown fishing boats dotted over its waters, into the heart of the Nile Delta. In the failing light the network of irrigation canals, the graceful date palms, and the unpretentious mud houses were dimly discernible.

All night long more trains were loaded and disappeared into the gloom. The Cairo-Alexandria express would be a credit to any English railway company, doing the journey of 133 miles in a little over three hours, but the troop trains, like their kindred all over the world, took a little more leisure, being about eight hours on the way, the first train reaching Zeitoun, four miles further on through Cairo, at 1 o'clock the next morning. The baggage and supplies were tumbled out into the darkness; guards were mounted; and horses and men trudged their weary way about a mile and a half along a dusty white road and across a sandy desert, eventually coming to a halt near a racecourse, to the picket fence of which the horses were made secure, while those who could lay down on the sand to snatch an hour or two of sleep.

It was the Egyptian winter and the nights were exceedingly cold, but the weary men slept on. More and more trains rolled in to Helmieh and Palais de Koubbeh; more and more men and horses stumbled into the bivouac, until about 5 o'clock even the heaviest sleeper was awake and endeavouring to restore circulation until the rising sun should

dissipate the morning mist. A great hunger became infectious--most men had a ration of bully beef and biscuits, but the wherewithal to make the welcome billy of tea was not forthcoming. Then the New Zealanders found real friends--friends in need--the men of the East Lancashire Territorial Division, for the generous North Countrymen arrived with steaming-dixies of tea and "summat t' eat." These were the first English troops we had "lain" alongside, and the good-fellowship so welcomely begun in the desert was strengthened later on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

[Illustration:

[_Photo by the Author_

"DONKS."

These big mules of the N.Z. Divisional Train were bred in North America.]

Presently the sun burst triumphantly through the mist and disclosed a bivouac of thousands of men and horses lying on the edge of a limitless desert. As far as the eye could see was a yellow sandy plain. This was skirted on the Cairo side by the main Heliopolis-Suez road, which ran east and west through the camp, and was bounded on the far horizon by a range of low brown sandhills. Soon all hands were at work pitching headquarters and the supply depots south of this main road and the other units north of it. A new road at right angles to the main road was constructed in a northerly direction--on the right of which the mounted rifles, artillery and ambulance placed their tents and horse lines, while the infantry occupied the whole of the left hand side. Water-pipes had been laid on and watering troughs for horses were already on the ground, and by evening some order had been evolved, though many troops had again to bivouac in the open, realizing that, notwithstanding the poets, the sands of the desert do become very cold about 2 o'clock in the morning.

By the end of a week all the ships had been cleared of men, horses and stores, and the three colonial camps had shaken down into something like order--the Australian infantry at Mena, under the shadow of the great Pyramids; the Australian Light Horse at Medi; and the New Zealanders at Zeitoun. The horses were not fit for either transport work or driving, but for a week or two were exercised in progressive work until able to stand the strain of manoeuvres. Out of nearly four thousand horses only eighty-eight failed to survive the buffetting journey through the Tasman Sea and Great Australian Bight, the sweltering heat of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, and the hazardous acclimatization in a hot and sandy desert--there they stood in long and polished rows, chewing the succulent berseem and munching the dry and uninviting tibbin, which apparently caused the horses much less concern than it did the anxious troopers.

[Illustration:

[_Photo by the Author_

THE WATER CART ON THE DESERT.]

Training commenced in earnest. Early every morning the infantry battalions paraded in full marching order and trudged through miles of sandy desert. Like so much of the soldier's life, this work was not interesting, but it was necessary; with clothing designed for a cool climate the long columns swung out along the never-ending sands, hardening the hardy ones, the cruel desert slowly but mercilessly winnowing out the few unfit. If a man had a bad knee or a weak chest, those weary sweltering marches and misty nights sought out the weak, who were sent to the Egyptian Army Hospital at Abassia, where Australian nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service nursed them tenderly back to health, or sent them broken-hearted to convalesce at Alexandria preparatory to their long sea voyage home.

[Illustration:

[_Lent by Capt. Boxer, N.Z.M.C._

IN THE SHADE OF THE DATE PALMS.]

The mounted rifles, artillery and engineers daily exercised their horses and teams until it was possible to have squadron and battery training. Out in the hot sun all day, by diligence and care, men and horses became efficient units in the great machine. The way was not always a sandy one; sometimes the route lay along the banks of the irrigation canals, past ancient sakiehs and Archimedean screws lifting the precious water into the little tributary canals that are the life of Egypt. Past fields of wheat and tomatoes; acres of beans reminding one of Thoreau's sojourn in the wilds; down scented orange groves and acacia avenues; through acres and acres of the clover known as berseem--the soldiers went their way, marvelling at the fertility of a land that produces three crops within the year.

On those fresh dewy mornings, with the crows chattering noisily in the trees overhead, one realized what made Egypt triumph over Time. These simple fellaheen and their forbears had watched Hittite, Assyrian, Persian, Greek and Roman sweep through the country and ravish its beauty, to be followed in later days by Saracen and Turk with the same intent; and here, long years after, following in the great line of fighting men, but striving for freedom and not conquest, the soldiers from the Antipodes, glorying in their youth, pass the old obelisk at Heliopolis and recognize that, perhaps more than pride of race, a fertile soil and a diligent husbandry make for national longevity.

[Illustration:

[_Photo by the Author_

CATTLE ON BERSEEM.

Berseem is a variety of lucerne, and is the staple green food of camels, horses, cattle, goats and sheep. It helps to keep the Nile Delta fertile.]

[Illustration: "LIZZIE"]

It may have been because of the church parades, where men sang the hymns they knew--hymns associated with their early life and Sunday school, or perhaps during the service men let their minds wander from the dust and glare of Egypt to the green fields and the loved ones of home--but whatever the cause, Sunday was essentially the day of letter writing. On Sunday afternoons, groups of men wandered farther afield--to the mighty Pyramids of Ghizeh, there to pose on the protesting camels for the conventional photograph of tourist, sphinx and pyramid; or perchance to the Zoo at Ghezireh, with its quaint mosaic paths, its giraffes and the bewitching "Lizzie," with her radiant smile and open countenance. Crowds were fascinated by the collection of antiquities in the Egyptian Museum, and by those polished cases in which, surrounded by great sphinxes and pylons, sleep the former kings of four and five thousand years ago. It is difficult to conceive that these were ever people of flesh and blood, until the revelation of mummified queens with their tiny babies forces one to realize that they, too, once were really human in their hates and loves, their triumphs and disappointments.

[Illustration:

[Photo by the Author_

"MILK DIET."

A Camel Study on the road to Helouan.]

Most of the soldiers' spare time was naturally spent in Cairo. Here everything seemed to be licensed except the drinking shops--the newsboy needed a license to sell his papers; the donkey boys and donkeys, who seemed numberless, were really carefully numbered; the futile red-tarbushed police spent much of their time chasing the bootblack who dared to ply without a permit. Owing to the war, the tourist season had failed--the rich Americans had stayed at home--but in the well-paid Australians and New Zealanders the astute merchants found suitable substitutes, whom they proceeded to bleed most unmercifully. Out into the streets they came with their wares. In the natural course of affairs men hawked sugar-cane, vegetables, live poultry, sweetmeats and cakes; the clang of the liquorice-water sellers' gongs clashed with those of the lemonade man; round the cafes, where the patron sits at a little table on a footpath, men tendered their little trays of shrimps and dusty plates of strawberries--all these now supplemented by an army of boys and men trading walking-sticks and swagger canes by the thousand; antiques made out of Nile mud; ancient Dervish weapons with the dust of Birmingham still upon them; foreign postage stamps on sheets; scenic postcards and questionable pictures; dainty little fly-whisks and "pieces of the true Cross."

Watching from the balconies of the fashionable hotels (every soldier is fashionable while the money lasts) the procession filling the street below was always interesting. The Rolls-Royce of the Egyptian Pasha slowing down behind a string of heavily-laden camels; a man with a performing monkey protesting against the intrusion of a flock of turkeys shepherded ahead and astern by old women--solemnly down the main street of Cairo go the old ladies with the birds; a wedding procession with a raucous band meanders past; and jostling one another on the road, shouting arabais with their two-horse cabs, scurrying motor cyclists of the Army of Occupation, and the quaint one-horsed lorries perambulating the closely-veiled collection of ladies that go to make the modest modern harem.

Like the schoolboy, the soldier dearly loves a tuck shop. Army fare is very monotonous. The soldier on trek and in the trenches constantly talks of his likes and dislikes in the matter of eating and drinking. So it was that the hotels were always crowded--a hot bath and a meal were always welcome--and the girls of Cairo were never treated more liberally and often to the daintiness of Sault's and Groppi's.

The Egyptian, like the Babu, is fond of bursting into print. The comedian in the colonial forces discovered a rich new field. Eating houses purveying the fried steak and eggs and tomatoes, together with imitation Scotch whisky and Greek beer, came forth in all their glory of calico signs inscribed "The Balclutha Bar," this with a fine disregard for the prohibition tendencies of the Southern town; "The Waipukurau Reading Rooms," and the "Wellington Hotel--very cheap and breezy." Every township in Australia and New Zealand was similarly honoured!

[Illustration:

[Lent by Capt. Boxer, N.Z.M.C.]

ON THE TOP OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

This New Zealand officer, the two Australians, the Ghurkha officer and the two Ghurkhas are typical of the men who in August 1915, reached the highest points on the Gallipoli Peninsula--the New Zealanders on Chunuk Bair; the Australians on Abdel Rahman Bair; the Ghurkhas on Hill Q.]

The most ubiquitous person was easily the bootblack. A soldier could not walk along the street without being besieged by a pestering multitude crying "Bootsa clean, sir! no good, no money; Kiwi polish, sir!" Upon sitting down in a railway station or elsewhere, one's boots would be attacked by a swarm which had to be literally kicked away.

The places of amusement were very attractive. The houses that combined refreshment with entertainment were liberally patronized; the food was much appreciated, and the efforts of the artists cheerfully tolerated. In the first flush of life in a Continental city, the casinos, dancing houses and saloons were far too popular, until the nastiness of these

places became apparent through the numbers on the morning sick parades, whereupon officers and men alike realized that they could not keep fit by dancing till the small hours of the morning. The soldier knows his faults, but he strongly resents armchair criticism. It is not difficult to avoid temptation if one sits quietly at home. A cabbage is not immoral, it is unmoral. It is easy to condemn the men who sometimes are not temperate in all things, but the soldier finds it easy to live a prodigal life. He reasons, perhaps quite wrongly, that he may as well eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow he may be in the casualty list. The soldier will not try to defend his conduct. He recognizes he is a man, with most of the human frailties, yet is prepared at a word and for an ideal, to place his body as a shield between his country and his country's enemies.

It was decided to use the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as the nucleus of a Division. The New Zealand Infantry Brigade and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade were to be joined by the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade and the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, at that time on the high seas, en route to Egypt. As regards divisional troops, there was a great shortage. A Divisional Ammunition Column was an urgent necessity. A cable was sent to New Zealand asking for the despatch of a second Howitzer Battery (one was already on the water) and a Howitzer Brigade Ammunition Column as the necessary complement. A Field Company of Engineers was to be formed out of surplus reinforcements, and a cable was despatched to New Zealand for a second company. The Divisional Train was to be organized as soon as the men and mechanical transport could be obtained. The Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps was also attached and posted to the Wellington Infantry Battalion as a fifth company.

[Illustration:

[Lent by Major Brunt, W.I.B.]

NEW ZEALAND FIELD ARTILLERY PASSING BAB-EL-HADID, CAIRO.]

The camp rapidly acquired a well-groomed air. Patterns in stone ornamented the surroundings of each tent. Regimental crests and mottoes, representations of New Zealand birds and Maori proverbs were picked out in little coloured pebbles gathered on the desert. It was discovered that oats, rice and other grains, if soaked in water, germinated vigorously when planted in the sand. Soon among the tents of the mounted units there appeared many green patches like miniature lawns. Round the officers' messes more elaborate gardens were attempted. From Cairene florists pot plants were procured; these were plunged, pot and all, into beds made of soil carted from the Canal banks, and there, watered by the careful Arab gardener, roses and canna bloomed profusely.

The newspaper boys were a never failing fount of amusement. Knowing no English but a few carefully taught swear words, these boys would stop the first slouch hat they met, and ask to have read over in English the gist of the headlines. Many an honest soldier would read the lines as

printed, but it was too good a field for the wags to miss. Accordingly it was not uncommon to hear the news cried something like this: "Time-ees Eyp. Very good news! Captain----dead again!" One small boy made a hobby of "Very good news! 'Egyptian Times' to-morrow!"

Next to the newsboys in number and popularity were the sellers of oranges. Wherever the troops went in the desert, at smoke-oh, up would come the boys with the "oringies, very beeg, very sweet," three for a half-piastre. The oranges were little ones, but with a very meaty and juicy pulp, and were most grateful and refreshing in the desert heat. So sudden was their appearance that it seemed these people, together with the boys who sold the cakes and the ones with the hard-boiled eggs, must live in the clouds and drop straight down wherever the dust cloud settled.

[Illustration: "ORINGIES!"]

Egypt was nominally a province of Turkey, but the Khedive, Abbas Hilma Pasha, having gone over to the Central Powers with Turkey, it was notified on December 18, 1914, that Egypt was placed under the protection of His Majesty the King. The suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt thus terminated. The person appointed to the place of the late Khedive was His Highness Prince Hussein Kamel Pasha, the eldest living prince of the family of Mohammed Ali. His Highness was to be proclaimed Sultan of Egypt at the Abdin Palace, Cairo, on the morning of December 20. The Australians and New Zealanders furnished representatives to line the streets--the Otago and Wellington Infantry Battalions with their bands doing duty for New Zealand. The detachment of Ceylon Planters' Rifles Corps also assisted in guard duty and were posted in the Abdin Square. The streets and buildings were gaily decorated--many Italian and Greek and French flags being displayed, but principally Union Jacks and ensigns and the new Egyptian flag, red with three white crescents and stars.

[Illustration: THE MARCH THROUGH CAIRO.

The Field Troop of New Zealand Engineers passing Shepherd's Hotel.]

The authorities entrusted with holding Egypt and the Suez Canal were sorely troubled in early December in reference to the Turks proclaiming a Holy War. The Nationalists were active, but with the arrival of the colonial troops the anxiety of those responsible was greatly relieved. The suspected civilians and Turkish officers holding high command in the Egyptian Army were deported to Malta. The Egyptian understands armed strength and despises weakness. Being aware of this, it was deemed advisable to parade the troops as strong as possible and march through the most populous parts of the city.

The New Zealanders were ordered to march through Cairo three days after the coronation. Leaving the camp early in the morning, the parade moved down the beautiful asphalt roads; past processions of camels laden with sugar-cane; past old women with their herds of predatory flocks of sheep and goats; past Pont Limoun and Bab-el-Hadid barracks to the

Opera Square, where the General Officer Commanding His Majesty's Forces in Egypt took the salute. This far was plain sailing, but presently the head of the column dived down a narrow bazaar where four men could hardly ride abreast. Into this dark slum went the mounted men; the glistening guns of the artillery; the collapsible boats of the Field Troop; the cable waggons of the signallers; then the long line of desert-trained, sun-tanned infantry, with the ambulance and some more mounted men bringing up the rear. In the bazaars it was almost dark, and in the narrower streets, where the projecting balconies seemed to meet overhead, it was not much better. It was a relief to get to wider streets and less foul air. Lining the streets were thousands of people, all seemingly in a good humour. In the open workshops, old men working at primitive loom and lathe never even looked up. Down past the schools and colleges, where hot-headed young Nationalists were wont to air their grievances, the cavalcade clattered on its noisy way; here, perhaps, there was a little scowling. The common people--the men clad in their many-coloured robes and each wearing the red, flat-topped fez worn by every male from the Sultan to the donkey driver--made quite a splash of colour as they crowded on the sidewalk in the shade of the trees and cheered and clapped with apparent earnestness. Even as the fellaheen appreciates the fact that under British rule he has to pay his taxes only once, so the poor and working class of Egypt recognized that since these bloodless conquerors arrived from overseas, even the beggar and the seller of Turkish delight had accumulated a little hoard of piastres. The disturbances of 1919, however, show that the Egyptian of the cities is a very gullible person.

[Illustration:

[_Photo by the Author_

AN EGYPTIAN PLOUGHMAN.

The wooden plough is shod with a metal point. The furrow is not turned over. The earth is merely broken and pushed aside.]

Christmas Eve saw the arrival of the British section of the New Zealanders, a contingent of six officers and 234 other ranks who had enlisted in England. These were men who were away from New Zealand when war broke out--some were gold-dredging in the East; some were working in the copper mines in Spain; but wherever they were--Pernambuco, Sarawak or the Andes--when the call came they hastened to the Old Country and enlisted. Engineers, sailors, painters, actors and gentlemen of leisure, they banded together in England and were organized as a machine-gun corps for France, but were eventually sent out to Egypt. Smart and well drilled, they made an excellent impression, and were just the men wanted for the nucleus of the new engineer and transport services, between which two branches they were equally divided.

The Christmas dinner was eaten out of doors in the hot sun, as the new dining huts were not ready. New Year was ushered in by festivals in the city, while out on the desert the regimental bands played all the

old familiar tunes, the men meanwhile holding impromptu dances under the silent desert stars.

[Illustration:

[Photo by the Author_

CHRISTMAS DINNER, 1914.]

Every week the division was becoming better organized and more like the working whole. From day to day inspections were held by the subordinate commanders. Periodically, staff officers held minute inspection of units, until on two occasions the whole division was paraded for General Maxwell, the General Officer Commanding the Force in Egypt. Each day now saw an improvement. Transport was continually arriving. The division was now officially styled "The New Zealand and Australian Division," as there would be two complete Australian Brigades incorporated--the 1st Light Horse and the 4th Infantry Brigade.

January 25 was a red-letter day, occupied by the New Zealand Infantry preparing the camp for the 4th Australian Brigade, due to arrive during the week. But at 5 o'clock that afternoon came the thrilling news from Army Corps Headquarters that the Infantry Brigade was needed hurriedly on the Suez Canal to support the Indian troops against an attack by the Turks, who were reported to be advancing. During that night seven days' supplies were carted to the railway stations of Helmieh and Palais de Koubbeh; ammunition was served out; men's kits were checked and deficiencies supplied. Far into the night excited soldiers talked, and scorning sleep, waited expectantly for the morrow.

THE TUCUMAN EXPRESS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Across South America*, by Hiram Bingham

For nearly three centuries the most important trade-route in South America was the overland trail from Buenos Aires to Lima by way of the silver mines of Potosí. The system of travel for both passengers and freight was well established. In 1773 there was published a little book called "El Lazarillo," "The Blind Man's Guide," which contains full information for travellers going from Buenos Aires to Lima with exact itineraries and "with some useful notes for those new business men who traffic by means of mules." The road with its post-houses, its relays of mules, and its provisions for the comfort of man and beast is well described. Buenos Aires is credited with having twenty-two thousand souls, of whom "ninety-nine are orphans and sixty-eight are in jail!"

I should have liked nothing better than to have been able to follow "The Blind Man's Guide" from post-house to post-house along the entire distance. But alas, since the days of railways, many of the road-houses that formerly offered "good accommodations to travellers," have

disappeared, and it is necessary to go as the world goes and take the train--when there is one.

On November 13, 1908, accompanied by Mr. Huntington Smith, Jr., I left Buenos Aires for Bolivia. The first stage of the journey, seven hundred and twenty miles, was by train to Tucuman, over the tracks of the Buenos Aires and Rosario R. R., one of the oldest and richest railways in Argentina. Our train was made up entirely of vestibuled sleeping and dining cars.

Among the first-class passengers was a newly arrived Spanish mercantile clerk and a French commercial traveller. I noticed more French in Argentina and Brazil than on the West Coast or in the northern countries. Especially in the large cities, they, with the Germans and English, have been very active in promoting local enterprises.

In the first fifteen miles out from Buenos Aires we saw numbers of villas shaded by groves of eucalyptus trees standing in the midst of the owner's broad acres. There is considerable evidence of market gardening and general agriculture. So far as we could see from the train, the roads are very bad and have not improved since the days of the woe-begotten travellers who had to cross these plains in ox-carts.

When Edmund Temple, the breezy secretary of the Potosí, La Paz & Peruvian Mining Association, crossed Argentina on his way to Bolivia in 1825, he was struck with the immense number of "hoppers" that they passed on the Pampas. He says the locusts covered the road and adjacent parts for miles. In those days, pasturage was plenty, and cultivated fields were scarce, so nobody cared very much. It is only with the increasing importance of crops that the Argentinos have come to regard the swarms of locusts as a great pest, and have spent many thousands of dollars fighting them. They are now planning to build a fence of sheet zinc, costing several million dollars, to keep back the "hoppers." Some modern travellers have had their trains delayed by locust swarms on the tracks, but we saw comparatively few.

Our first stops were at suburban towns, which are more attractive than one would suppose in a country that is so flat. At one of them, on the River Tigre, the English colony has made boating fashionable, with festivals like those at Henley. We had showers in the course of the morning, but the country over which we passed looked rather dry.

A characteristic feature of the Pampas are the modern windmills with their steel frames. Most of them are of American make, for despite our backwardness in some lines, we have been peculiarly successful in supplying Argentina with windmills. In fact, we have almost monopolized that particular business. Fortunately, our manufacturers seem also to excel in the production of small and inexpensive motors, such as are particularly desired on farms and ranches where, owing to the extreme difficulty of getting workmen, there is an excellent market for labor-saving machinery. Notwithstanding this encouraging feature, for every million dollars' worth of goods which Argentina imports from the United States, she imports six millions from Europe.

Many of the interior towns have their own electric lighting plants. The agents of German manufacturers have been far-sighted in following up new concessions and in getting large contracts for the installation of German machinery. It takes a good many windmills to equal one electric lighting plant.

Our train made a short stop at Rosario, the second largest city in Argentina. Owing to its advantageous situation at the bend of the Paraná River, it has become a most important port.

Accessible throughout the year to vessels drawing sixteen feet, it is the terminus of many trans-Atlantic lines which bring European manufactured goods here in exchange for wheat and cattle. Some ore from Bolivia is also shipped from here. On our mule trip in Southern Bolivia we saw hundreds of animals laden with huge packing-cases from Europe marked "via Rosario."

The other important new port in Argentina is Bahia Blanca, which is situated several hundred miles south of Buenos Aires and is connected by railways with the newly opened regions in northern Patagonia. There is no scarcity of good agricultural land as yet undeveloped. Were the government of Argentina as well managed for the interests of the individual farmer as the governments of our western states, there is no question that Argentina would secure a much higher grade of immigrant. The opportunities are truly magnificent, but I was repeatedly told by foreign residents who are engaged in farming, that there are many unpleasant features. The truth of the matter is that the Argentino is too fond of keeping political power in his own hands. He does not understand all that is meant by a constitutional democratic form of government. It is not his fault, for his race history, as we have seen, has given him other inheritances and prejudices. Nevertheless he is learning.

Leaving Rosario we plunged into the heart of a great agricultural and pastoral region. The heat and dust were rather trying. The humidity was considerable, being about eighty per cent in our car. In truth, we experienced all the various annoyances to which one is subject when crossing our western plains, in a moderately slow train. We had been told that this Tucuman express was "the finest train in America." Some of the young Englishmen on our steamer were extremely enthusiastic over it and assured us that we could have nothing so fine in the United States. Consequently we were somewhat disappointed to find the standard of comfort not any greater than it was on our western trains fifteen years ago.

There is one thing, however, in which the "B. A. and R." is ahead of most American railroads. At each station are one or two very large sign-boards conveniently placed so that the stranger has no difficulty in ascertaining whether he has reached his destination or not. And there are other little things along the line that make one feel the presence of railway officials carefully trained in English railway methods. It goes without saying that the road is largely owned in England and has

Anglo-Saxons for its principal officers.

Argentina has about thirteen thousand miles of railway operated under some twenty companies. One thousand seven hundred miles are owned by the government, but by far the larger part of the railway system is controlled by British capitalists. A little more than half of the mileage consists of the very broad five and a half foot gauge. The remainder is one metre or less. The three gauges necessitate considerable transferring of freight and passengers.

To one who is accustomed to thinking of Argentina as a rich but undeveloped region, it seems incredible that she should have fifty thousand freight-cars and two thousand passenger-coaches. It is still more astonishing to learn that every year her railways carry thirty million passengers, and thirty million tons of freight, of which about one third are cereals. During the year 1906, the receipts from the passenger traffic amounted to more than \$18,000,000, and from freight traffic to something over \$55,000,000. Statistics are dry and uninteresting except as they open our eyes to conditions of which we have formed but a small conception. The extremely rapid growth of the Argentine railways is shown by the fact that while in 1884 the capital invested did not amount to \$100,000,000, it now amounts to over \$700,000,000.

So far as killing people is concerned, the Argentine railways do not come up to our record, although they do fairly well. In 1905 they killed, all told, two hundred and eighteen persons, and in 1906, two hundred and fifty. This is a heavier percentage per passenger carried than in the United States.

Towards evening we left the farming country and entered a barren region where great stretches of perfectly flat land seemed to promise splendid results if it could be irrigated.

The dust increased, and we were glad enough to be hauled over these dry pampas of Santa Fé and Santiago del Estero in a night, instead of being obliged to spend a fortnight on them following a slow-moving Spanish caravan.

When we looked out of the car window the next morning all was changed. Sugar-cane fields waving attractively in the sunlight, big wheeled carts lumbering noisily along drawn by oxen or mules, lithe horsemen riding strong little ponies through thickets of dry scrub, had transformed the scene from the everlasting prairies of the pampas into the highlands of the northwest. The hills beyond the fields of cane were covered with a scrubby growth. To the north-west and north arose green mountains that seemed to be forested to their tops. Some of the trees were in bloom with brilliant yellow flowers.

The contrast between the dry, barren pampas and the green cane-fields of Tucuman is so striking that Argentine writers have been accustomed to speak of the latter in terms of the most extravagant praise. Even the well-travelled Sarmiento called it the "Eden of America," "where nature

had displayed its greatest pomp!" As a matter of fact Tucuman is admirably situated in a very fertile and highly cultivated plain, and is the centre of the most important sugar-growing region in Argentina. In its immediate vicinity we counted a dozen tall chimneys of sugar factories.

We reached the city about ten o'clock.

It was founded about the time that Sir Walter Raleigh was looking for Eldorado. Here in 1816, the Argentine Congress passed their Declaration of Independence. Here Belgrano won a great victory over the Spanish armies that had descended from Peru to crush the Argentine patriots.

The Tucuman station, a large modern affair, was chiefly interesting because of the picturesque character of the luggage that was lying about the platforms. Chairs and cots, pots and pans, spring mattresses, and hen-coops, all bore evidence to the fact that this is still a young country into which new settlers are coming, and that the Railroad Company has the good sense to make it easy for people to travel with all their possessions. Everything was checked and went in the luggage-van, as a matter of course, instead of being handed over to "slow-freight" or rapacious express companies, as with us.

Most of the immigrants were Italians from Genoa and the north of Italy. A few came from Galicia, the home of Spain's most sturdy peasantry. Neither immigrants nor residents wore picturesque costumes. Even the Gauchos are dressed in civilized raiment and bear little resemblance to the South American Indian of our dreams. It is too progressive a country to allow its clothes to get in its way.

The facts relating to Buenos Aires and Argentina are at every one's elbow so it is all the more astonishing how ignorant the average American is regarding the great metropolis of the southern hemisphere. We are very fond of telling stories of our English cousins who imagine that our western states are overrun with wild Indians and desperadoes. And we think it inexcusable in them to judge from the frequent press reports of lynchings and "hold-ups" that we are an uncivilized, lawless people. Yet we judge the Argentinian just as hastily. Not only are we quite ignorant of his material progress, we also frequently slander him for having an "unstable government." "Revolutions" or struggles for governmental control occur, it is true, but they do not amount to much and hardly deserve the exaggerated reports of them which are published abroad. In a country that has been bound together by such a network of railroads as Argentina, making it possible for the government in power to send its troops rapidly wheresoever it will, the habit of playing with revolutions is sure to die out. In the old days when transportation was slow and difficult, it was possible for a popular leader to gather a considerable band of followers and prepare to march on the capital before the government knew of his existence. Such uprisings, however, are necessarily the work of days or weeks, and it is becoming more and more difficult to bring them to a successful issue. As an evidence of the more stable condition of the government and as showing how Argentina has recovered from the setback which it got at the time of the failure

of the Baring Brothers, it is well to note that in the ten years between 1895 and 1905, the foreign trade of Buenos Aires more than doubled, growing to more than half a billion dollars annually.

TRESUMPSCOTT POND

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *A Northern Countryside*, by Rosalind Richards

Tresumpscott Pond lies three miles eastward from our river, set deep between the folds of wooded and rocky hills, and the woods frame it close.

You climb the rise of a long slow-mounting hill which at its southern extremity breaks sharply down in granite ledges, mostly pine-covered, and there right below you lies this little lonely, perfectly guarded lake. There is only one opening in the woods, a farm which slopes down to the shore in two wide fields, with a low rambling farmhouse. There is no other roof in sight.

The pond is about a mile long and half as wide. It has the attributes of a big lake, in little; deep bays up which loons nest, and wooded headlands, ending in smooth abrupt rocks which enclose small curved beaches of white sand, as firm and fine as sea sand. The western bay ends in a river of swamp, and all along the north side the wood screens a broken wall of fern-grown cliffs, with quantities of columbines among their crannies. The long slope above the woods is a sheep pasture, partly under pines and partly open, with ledge and cinquefoil-covered boulders cropping out in the close turf, and tall mulleins standing all about like candlesticks.

The whole locality is rich in treasures, and here on the north side of the pond is a stretch of mossy glades and openings in the underwood which are covered with the fairy elegance of maiden-hair fern, the delicate black stems standing out against the rocks and moss. They grow under cool rich woods, with pink Lady's Slippers scattered in clumps among them.

The farm at Tresumpscott is an ample one, and Jacob Damren, who farms it, comes of fine stock, and is a big, hearty figure of a man. The Pond was his father's before him. His wife is a plain little woman, always clean and trim in fresh cotton print. They say her habitual sadness is because she has never liked the Pond. She was town-bred, and finds it utterly lonely, while to Jacob it holds everything that earth can give.

The land is very fertile and they prospered till well past middle life, when Jacob met with an accident that was hard to bear. A neglected cut on his thumb became infected, and soon there was swelling and pain in the whole hand. No one did the right thing, no one knew what to do beyond the old-fashioned farm treatments, and after a week of fever the arm had to go. They said it was only his wife's despairing weeping which

brought him at last to consent to amputation. At first he begged to be allowed to die sooner than face life again thus maimed.

He met the blow, once it fell, in a steady manly way, and now has come well out from under its shadow. A month ago I saw him out with his horse and drag, getting out stumps, and he was managing this troublesome business successfully. He smiled a patient, slow smile, as we came up.

"This comes kind of awkward for a one-armed man!" he called out, but spoke cheerily, and seemed delighted at the way he was achieving his stumping.

They have had other troubles. A son who lived at home and shared the farm, married a shallow, heartless girl, who left him, and so broke his heart and his whole hold on life that he could not bear the place without her, and has led a wandering, broken sort of existence since. Their other boy, though, is a good son indeed. He is part owner in a small cooperage and he drives over from week to week, puts in solid help on the farm, and brings his wife and babies to make cheerful Sundays for the old people.

Jacob and his wife love animals. The last time I was over there the cosset lamb came into the kitchen to ask for milk. Mrs. Damren was caressing two new red calves as if they were kittens, while Flora, Jacob's foxhound, and her two velvet-skinned, soft-eyed puppies played round them.

We drive over to the pond from time to time for swamp treasures of different kinds. Jacob has a tumble-down, lichen-covered boathouse where water-pewees and white-bellied swallows nest, in which he keeps a few of the worst boats in the world (with ash oars shaped like flattened poles and heavy as lead), and lets them out to people who come for pickerel or water-lilies. The whole western end of the pond is a laughing expanse of water-lilies and yellow Beaver Lilies, with the bright yellow butterfly-shaped blossoms of bladderwort in among them. Beyond these you come to a mixture of floating islands, tussocks, intricate channels of black water, and stretches of shaking cotton grass, which in June and July hide a host of slim-stemmed rose-colored swamp orchids, *_Arethusa_*, *_calopogon_*, and *_pogonia_*. You pole and shove your boat between the floating islands, submerging orchids and cotton-grasses alike in the black peat water, and beyond them reach the parti-colored velvet of the peat bog itself.

Balsam fir grows here, sweet rush and sweet gale, and quantities of Labrador Tea, with shining dark leaves (of which Thoreau made tea when camping on Chesuncook) and masses of delicate-stamened white flowers, which give out a warm resinous sweetness. All around there is the general bog fragrance of sphagnum and water-lilies, and the woodsy perfume of the rose-colored orchids.

Farther in shore, among the balsam firs, the growth dwindles to a general velvety richness of gem-like green and crimson mosses, blueberries, and cranberries and huckleberries, the large handsome

maroon-crimson flowers of the Pitcher-Plant, and the little bright-yellow-flowered Sundew, getting its nourishment from the insects caught in its sticky crimson filaments.

The pond is alive all summer with butterflies and birds. We spent a day there in June, and tried to follow a pair of Carolina rails, which ran and hid among the cotton-grasses, and ran again, and suddenly vanished as completely as if they had melted in air. We put up a bittern, but did not find her nest. Scores of red-wing black-birds had nested in the clustered bushes of the floating islands. We laid our oars down on the shaking cotton grass as a sort of bridge and worked our way from island to island, while a perfect cloud of birds chuckled and wheeled round us, uttering their guttural warning cries and their fresh "Hock-a-lees!" We looked into three red-wings' nests, and one king-bird's, all with eggs. The red-wing's eggs were pale blue, scratched and blotched with black as if by a child playing with ink and pen, while the king-bird's were a beautiful cream-color, marked in a circle round the large end with rich brown blotches.

As we went on to gather Pitcher-Plants and Sundew, we saw an eagle fishing over the lonely little lake; saw, too, a thing I have never seen before or since, for he caught a fish so big it pulled him under. He vanished out of sight completely, came up with a great flap, and, making heavy work of it, and flying so low he almost touched the water, he made off and gained the woods with his prize.

Besides our orchids and pitcher-plants (we washed the pitchers clear of insects, and drank from them), we had come for stickle-backs, which are found in the clear shallows by one of the small beaches. We had a net, and glass jars. They are such quick darting creatures that it is hard to get them. They are the liveliest of all pets for an aquarium, and prosper very fairly in captivity.

Early in the morning, when we first reached the pond, the bobolinks were rising and singing all over the lower water meadows, and the mists were turning to silver in the early sunlight. When we came up from the bog in the late afternoon the bobolinks were silent, but a mother sand-peep wheeled and cried about the field, afraid that we would find her chickens.

We cooled our hands and faces in the clear water and washed off the black peat mold, and went up to the farm. Mrs. Damren had fresh gingerbread for us, and creamy milk, and we sat round a table with a cheerful red cloth. The room was very homelike, with a good deal of dark wood, and bright pots and pans. A shot-gun and a rifle hung over the mantel, the guns poor Jacob will never use again. His hunting dog sat close to his chair.

The wife's sorrowful eyes turned always to her husband, but seemed at the same time to try to guard his empty sleeve from our glances. He, with a larger patience, was unconscious of it.

They told us a good thing; that two lads, sons of a minister in a

neighboring town, have built a little camp in Jacob's woods. They come over often to spend the night, and sometimes stay a week, and are great company. They come to Jacob for milk, butter, and eggs, and often spend the evening. The week before they had shot two coons, and they are busy mounting them, under his directions.

Jacob's face has a great peace in it, that of a man who has given everything in him to the place he lives in, and held nothing back. His beautiful, lonely little holding of wood and field and lake is better, for the work he has put into it, than when his father left it to him. He has cleared more fields, enriched the land, and drained the lower meadows. His son will have it after him. I have seldom seen a place which seemed more entirely home.

Jacob had cut the hay in his upper meadow early (he has to take his son's or a neighbor's help when he can get it), and it was already piled in sweet-smelling haycocks as we drove by, but the water meadows, where the purple fringed orchids and loosestrife grow in among the grasses, were still uncut. It was dusk, and the fireflies were out. Thousands of them flashed their soft radiance low over the perfumed meadow, and the fragrance of sweet rush and of the open water came to us from the lake.

TRAVELLING IN THE WILDS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *How the World Travels*, by A. A. Methley

After seeing the strange conveyances and modes of travel in Europe and in the civilised countries of Asia, it will be interesting to leave the beaten tracks behind us altogether for a time. We will go beyond the high roads and the railways, and find out how people make journeys in the great wildernesses of the world, where travellers must be prepared to undergo discomforts and hardships, to meet with dangers, and, very often, to carry their lives in their hands.

If we open our atlases and turn to the maps of Africa, America, Asia, and Australia, we shall find that in each continent there are blank spaces. Sometimes these are called deserts or forests, but often we can only guess at the character of the country from the fact of there being no rivers marked and very few names of towns and cities.

The most famous of all deserts is the Great Sahara, which extends for thousands of miles across the north of Africa. Most people picture it as a huge sandy plain, where there is no water and no sign of life or vegetation; but, in reality, although there are districts where the shifting sandhills stretch away as far as the eye can see, a vast part of the Sahara consists of a stony tableland covered with a scanty growth of low, thorny bushes.

In the deserts there are, moreover, many fertile spots looking like exquisite little green islands set in the midst of a glowing, yellow sea. They are called oases, and are found where there are wells or pools of water. Arabs live in these places, cultivating the land and building mud-houses, while other tribes spend their time in wandering about the desert, seeking food for their animals and trading in the scattered towns and villages. These wanderers, or nomads, with their camels, horses, and herds of sheep and goats, may be seen slowly moving across the great sunburnt plain and pitching their brown tents at night among the sand-dunes.

[Illustration: MIXED TRANSPORT IN NIGERIA.]

The nomadic Arabs travel in large parties called caravans, for there are brigands in the Sahara who would rob and murder lonely wayfarers. The men in the caravan often ride, and their horses are considered the finest in the whole world. The Arabs prize these horses highly and treat them well, never allowing them to be teased by the children, and, at the end of a long day's journey, giving them their meal of milk and dates before they eat anything themselves.

Horses, however, are only used for riding, and all the hard work is done by the camels, "the ships of the desert," as they are called. It is a strange sight to see a great caravan crossing the desert, sometimes as many as a thousand camels marching along in single file, each with a heavy load on his back.

Camels are strange animals, for although they are strong and have wonderful powers of endurance, they are surly, intractable, and even more obstinate than mules. Occasionally a camel will consider that he is overloaded, and lying down will snarl at his driver and refuse to move. Blows and commands are useless in such a case, but if the driver pretends to remove something from the burden the animal is often completely deceived, and thinking that he has outwitted his master and gained a victory, will rise to his feet and start off contentedly on the journey.

One of the greatest dangers of desert travel is lack of water, for wells are very few and far apart. Camels are particularly suited to these conditions, as they can live for several days without drinking, and when no water is forthcoming, will plod patiently on and on, until their strength is exhausted and they fall down beneath their heavy loads.

[Illustration: CAMEL WITH BRIDAL BOWER.]

It will be noticed in a caravan that some of the camels carry extraordinary fan-shaped palanquins on their backs. These contain the Arab ladies, whose religion obliges them to be veiled, and who can thus travel securely screened from sight. In the deserts of Asia the women ride in a much more airy and comfortable fashion, being provided with cushioned panniers slung on either side of the

camel's back and sheltered by a light awning. On the occasion of a wedding in the Nile Delta district, the bride is carried on a camel in a curious erection shaped like a Red Indian wigwam and decorated with a large tuft of palm-leaves.

From the deserts we go to the great tropical forests, and there, although there is plenty of water and shelter from the fierce rays of the sun, travellers have to encounter new difficulties, new hardships, and new dangers.

[Illustration: CARRIERS IN THE FOREST.]

Those of us who have seen only woods in our own islands can hardly imagine what one of the great forests of Central Africa, America, or Asia is like, with its huge trees, strange plants, and hot, steamy atmosphere, dank with the smell of rotting vegetation and stagnant water, or heavy with the overpowering fragrance of some tropical blossom. It is almost dark, for the foliage is dense, and the trees are, moreover, hung with matted curtains of creepers, while below is a tangled undergrowth, so tall and thick that pathways have to be cut through it inch by inch.

[Illustration: PALANQUIN FOR ARAB WOMEN.]

The travellers must needs walk single file through these narrow tracks, and they must be always armed and on their guard against the dangerous wild animals that live in those weird, gloomy jungles. Leopards, fierce gorillas, and rhinoceros, all have their homes in those dark thickets, and there are besides great herds of elephants that if alarmed will charge through the forest and trample the intruders underfoot.

In addition to these perils the natives are often unfriendly, and there have been many instances of cruelty and murder.

In these districts it is, of course, impossible to use wagons or any large vehicles, and the climate is unhealthy for horses and cattle. Negroes, therefore, act as carriers and march along the narrow paths with heavy loads on their heads. These natives are very strong, and may be seen carrying large bales, boxes, and even bicycles through the jungle.

The Europeans of the party either walk too, or are carried in hammocks slung on poles. An awning is fixed over the hammock, and the occupant can lie down comfortably while he is borne along by two or more negro porters. Wounded men or those ill with fever are often taken for many miles in this fashion, and in Nigeria special hospital hammocks are provided for this purpose on which the familiar red cross may be seen.

[Illustration: MONO-RAIL WORKED BY NATIVES.]

The natives of these tropical forests either carry their

merchandise and other burdens themselves, or have light conveyances suited to the narrow tracks that are the only roads of the country. The Sobo negroes of West Africa have a very ingenious arrangement, and often three or four of them may be seen walking in single file and carrying a long pole on their shoulders. From this pole are hung jars, bundles, and baskets of fruit and vegetables.

In another district a still more curious device is used. This is a single railway line running between two towns, on which light trucks can travel. These trucks have two wheels each, one behind the other, and to each truck is fastened a pole which projects on the left-hand side. Negroes walk beside the line, holding the poles and thus driving the cars along.

In regions where the forest is less dense and the climate more dry and healthy, animals can be used, and sometimes strange teams are seen--camels, donkeys, and oxen being all pressed into the transport service.

HISTORIC TOMBS AND LONELY GRAVES.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Six Months in Mexico*, by Nellie Bly
1888

How much I would like to paint the beauties of Mexico in colors so faithful that the people in the States could see what they are losing by not coming here. How I would like to show you the green valley where the heat of summer and blast of winter never dare approach; where every foot of ground recalls wonderful historical events, extinct races of men and animals, and civilization older by far than the pyramids. Then would I take you from the table-land to the mountain, where we descend into deep canons that compare in their strange beauty with any in the world; the queer separation of the earth, not more than 100 feet from edge to edge of precipice, but 400 feet deep. More wonderful still is the sight when the rainy season fills these gorges with a mad, roaring torrent. Then would I lead you to the edge of some bluff that outrivals the Palisades--and let you look down the dizzy heights 500 feet to the green meadows, the blooming orchards, the acres of pulque plant, the little homes that nestle at the foot of this strange wall. Then further up into the mountains you could see glaciers, grander, it is claimed, than any found in the Alps. Here are buried cities older than Pompeii, sculptures thousands of years old, hieroglyphics for the wise to study, and everywhere the picturesque people in their garb and manners of centuries ago--and all this within a day's travel from the city. Surely in all the world there is none other such wonderful natural museum.

Business men who wish to rest from their labors find perfect quiet in this paradise. All cares vanish. Some strange magic seems to rob one of all care, of every desire to hurry. Railways furnish comfortable and safe transportation; the people are attentive and polite, and

as many comforts are attainable as at any other place away from the States. People who have any desire to see Mexico in all its splendor should come soon, for civilization's curse or blessing, whichever it may be, has surely set a firm foot here, and in a few years, yielding to its influence, all will be changed. Already the dark-eyed senora has changed the lovely, graceful mantilla for stiff, ugly bonnets and hats; the poor Indian woman is replacing the fascinating reboza with a horrid shawl; the Indian man is changing sandals for torturing shoes and the cool linen pantaloons and serape for American pantaloons and coat. Civilization and its twin sister, style, have caught them in their grasp, and unless you come soon Mexico will cease to be attractive except as a new California.

There is one thing I hope will ever remain, and that is the graveyard of San Fernando, where most of the illustrious dead of Mexico are entombed. But it is doubtful, as a little beyond are the fine houses of the foreign representatives, and the houses are crowding up to the gate of this dead city as though trying to push it out of existence. An old cathedral, faced by a green plaza, rears its head at one side, near the massive iron gates which the keeper, sitting just within its portals, swings open and admits one with a welcome that is surprising. All around are people buried in the walls. The plates are decorated in all manner of ways. Some have a little niche which hold the image of the Virgin and several candles. Others are hung with wreaths, and some with crepe. The majority have places to hold candles, which are burnt there on certain days. The nearest tomb to the gate holds the remains of a young girl who died, quite suddenly, on the day she was to be married, just an hour before the time appointed. Near here is erected a fine shaft in honor of General Ignacio Comonfort, who was a President once, but was shot at Molino de Toria, November 13, 1863, by the Americans. Several yards beyond is a plain, brown stone, built in an oblong box shape, with a large, stone cross in the center. It is weather-beaten and worn, and looks to be centuries old. All the information it gives a stranger is in two large initials, T. M., rudely cut on the side.

No date or usual verse of regret from loving friends is inscribed, and somehow a thrill of pity strikes one for T. M., as it seems to be the only grave in all that quiet city that bears no mark of loving hands. I took my penknife and hastily cut in the soft stone R.I.P. When the Mexican friend, who had during this time been engaged with the gateman getting some information, came up he said: "The grave you stand beside is that of General Tomas Mejia, who was shot with Maximilian, and here is the tomb of the other." It was similar in shape to General Mejia's, but some kind hand had hung wreaths on the cross. General Miguel Miramon was president of the Republic before Maximilian. He was a brave and good man, and the emperor well knew his worth.

When they stood up to be shot, Maximilian in the center, Mejia on the right and Miramon on the left, the center of course being considered the place of honor, Maximilian, touching Miramon on the shoulder, said: "You are more worthy this place than I," and he exchanged places, and so they died.

The tomb of Benito Juárez, the Indian President, is the finest in the place. It is a long marble tomb. On it lies the life-size body of Juárez, partly covered with a mantle. Sitting at his head, with her hands on his heart, is a beautiful woman, representative of the nation mourning for its much beloved President. The whole is a perfect study, and was designed and executed by a Mexican.

The life of Juárez is a very romantic one. He is familiarly known as the "Lincoln of Mexico." He was born in the State of Oaxaca, 1806, and at the age of twelve years could neither read nor write. He was a full-blooded Indian, and could not even speak the Spanish language. However, he tried to improve his time, and in 1847 he was Governor of his native State. He went to New Orleans, on being banished by Santa Anna, but returned to Mexico in 1855 and became President of the Court of Justice. When Comonfort was overthrown by the clerical party, Juárez set himself up at Vera Cruz as Constitutional President of the Republic. The United States recognized him as such, and he successfully fought the priesthood and confiscated all the church property. When Maximilian ascended the throne, Juárez sent his family to New Orleans, but he remained here until compelled to cross the frontier. The United States, which had always favored Juárez, interfered in his behalf. At the termination of the War of the Rebellion Maximilian was betrayed and shot, and Juárez was re-elected in 1871, and died in office June 18, 1872.

He has a daughter who is married and living in Mexico in greater style than the president. She resembles her father. A story is told of Juárez that is new at the very least. He had plenty of enemies, especially among the church party. One day he sent a band out to capture an outlaw, who, notwithstanding his enemies, stood well with the clergy. The bandit was met on the highway and shot before he could utter a prayer. They said his soul was lost, and Juárez was to blame. When he was dying it was endeavored to keep the matter quiet, and the people were in ignorance of his fatal illness until one morning they saw a notice posted on street corners, which read in this style:

"Hell, 1.30. Juárez just arrived. Devil putting on his tail."

It was signed by the name of the bandit.

General Ignacio Zaragoza, the conqueror of the French in Puebla, May 5, 1862; General Vicente Guerrero, one of the principal heroes of the War of Independence; Mariano Otero, one of Mexico's most famous orators; Melchor Ocampo, a very distinguished philosopher and politician, and the companion and right hand of Juárez, helping him to establish the liberal principles; Francisco Zarco, one of the Constitutionals; General Jose Joaquin de Herrera, one of the best Presidents the Republic ever had, and other famous generals, statesmen, writers, and artists' fill up this quiet spot. The gates are only open now to visitors. They no longer register dead guests.

Among many other things Mexico can boast of is the public library. It

is situated on Calle de San Augustin, in the old church and convent of Saint Augustin. The high iron fence which incloses it is topped with marble busts of famous orators and authors. The little green plot in front is filled with rare plants and fountains. The face of the church is a mass of wondrous carvings, and the vestibule is a crown of splendid architecture. Directly over the door leading into the room is the "World." On one side brass hands and figures tell the hour. Standing on one foot on top of it is a life-size figure of "Time," in bronze. The attitude, the scythe over the shoulder, the expression on the face, the long, flowing beard and hair are perfect. Opposite Time, and at the other end of the room is the Mexican coat of arms. Book-cases line each side, and in the center are reading-desks and easy-chairs. At the right entrance is a large statue of Humboldt, and on the left Cuvier. Opposite one another are Descartes and Copernicus, Dante and Alarcon. Origen and Virgil, Plato and Cicero, Homer and Confucius, and in the center a large figure with a book in hand marked "Science."

The books are catalogued under the heads of philosophy, history, fiction, etc., and are placed in cases alphabetically. They are in all languages, and many of them are very ancient. Some are on parchment and in picture writing. The library has catalogued one hundred and sixty thousand volumes, and owns many besides that are not yet sorted and arranged. It is open from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and is equally free to all. It is well patronized by men, but it is safe to say no woman has ever read a book inside its walls. The only women who ever enter are tourists. The books are not permitted to go outside the building. A man gets a printed card. On it he writes the title, number and case of his book, and when the hour comes to close he lays the book on the desk of the janitor and gives his card to the superintendent. Many of the ancient books were taken at the time of the confiscation of the monasteries and convents.

The carnival passed off very quietly. As I said before, Mexico is becoming civilized, and doing away with many ancient and beautiful customs. In former years every day on carnival week the paseo was crowded with masked men and women in historic and comic garb, and battles were fought with empty egg-shells and queerly constructed things for the same purpose. This year every person went, but only the fewest number were masked. Some few among the lower class threw egg-shells. Beyond this all was quiet. It has also been the custom to give fancy-dress and masked balls. In all the theaters public balls were held and the clubs gave private receptions. The French Club had their rooms nicely decorated and the best people attended, dressed in the finest and most original costumes. Perhaps the most striking one was a creamy satin embroidered with red roses and covered with natural butterflies of gorgeous and brilliant hue. The young ladies all wore their dresses just reaching their knees, and the fancy boots displayed were something marvelous; satin of all shades, embroidered with gold and silver, and trimmed with flowers.

One couple, who have been lately engaged, were dressed alike. The girl wore a short dress of white satin, profusely trimmed with pompons of

white fur; white satin boots trimmed the same way, and over her loose hair of marvelous length and thickness was a point lace veil. The groom wore satin knee breeches, short coat, high hat and boots, all covered with the white fur pompons. They were accompanied by the mother, in a brocade crimson velvet on a canary background and rich yellow lace, low-necked and en train, and the father in common dress suit. The Mexican boys never appeared better than in the grand old dregs of former days. Mostly crimson velvet and satin were affected, showing to an advantage their superb eyes and complexion. The women were remarkable for their homeliness.

A grand supper of thirty-five courses was served and more wine, champagne and cigarettes consumed than would be done at forty receptions in the East.

Now, having shown you now they do at private balls where only the _elite_ are permitted to attend, would you like to don a mask and domino and sit with these very same people in the boxes at the theaters, and watch the promiscuous crowd beneath? It is not a select crowd by any means, but one composed of the lowest in the land. Yet men take their wives, sisters, and friends, masked, that they may watch through opera glasses this wonderful sight, and wives and sweethearts get friends to take them, that they, unseen, may see if husband or lover takes part in the revel, for the men are of the best and wealthiest families.

At 11 o'clock the doors are flung open and people come in slowly. The two bands play alternately the Spanish danza and the waltz. The women come in dressed in all the styles ever invented. One beautiful woman wore a blue satin dress, embroidered with pink rose buds. Another wore blue, trimmed with beaded lace, which glittered like hundreds of diamonds in the gas-light. Two came together, one in black, the other in crimson velvet, profusely and gayly embroidered. Some were dressed after the style of the male dudes of the States, but the majority wore nothing but a comic-opera outfit, dotted with silver or gold spangles, according to the color. The men, with the exception of a half dozen, wore their common suits, and never removed their hats. Nearly all the women wore their hair short, which they had powdered.

At first they wore masks, but in a short time they were removed, and by 3 o'clock everybody was drunk. When a man refused to dance with a woman, a fight was the result, and everybody would quit dancing until it was settled. One year fifteen men were killed during the week it lasted. This year but one has met his death. The actions and dancing of this mob will bear no description, and at 7 o'clock the performance ended. The manager of the National Theater has promised that his house shall never be used for this purpose again.

The carnival was celebrated in fine style at Amecameca, right at the foot of the White Lady. Indians came from all parts of the country and paraded the entire week around the church and temple with lighted candles. At Puebla they had egg battles, and in all little places the feast was carried on as in former days.

Sights in the city have begun to assume a familiar look, although one never tires of them, and I begin to think of moving elsewhere.

The buried city is slowly being unearthed at San Juan. Already they have brought to light a house of magnificent size and finish, and in a few days it will be well worth a visit. Tourists have been going down regularly, but beyond a few men at work, little was to be seen. What they missed they furnished with their imagination, as did also some correspondents who would not wait to get legitimate news.

The mint, which is situated in the suburbs of the city, is turning out fifty thousand dollars in silver per day. The first coin struck was in 1535, and in three hundred years they coined \$2,200,000,000. The men employed get from one to two dollars a day. In a month from now the government is going to make fifteen million cents. Gold coin, although in use here, is not made more than once a month.

The arsenal is in a fine old building directly in the opposite direction from the mint. All departments are not running--for the lack of money, so they say. They make but three hundred and fifty entire guns a day, but have one million dollars' worth in stock. In one room they have a fine collection of arms, such as are used by every nation in the world. The iron and wood used is Mexican, the latter a superb walnut, which requires no oil or varnish. The people here employed get from one real (twelve and a half cents) to two dollars a day, the highest that is paid.

The tourists who have such a mania for mementos have brought disgrace on themselves and others also. The governor has been very kind, and has thrown open the ambassadors' hall, without reserve, for their inspection. It is a beautiful place, containing life-size paintings of Washington, Juarez, Hidalgo and other illustrious men. The chandeliers, hung with brilliant cut-glass pendants, terra cotta and alabaster vases and handsome clocks, were once the property of Maximilian. At either end of the long hall are crimson velvet and gold-hung thrones, where the president receives his guests. Some trophy fiend, most probably some girl with the thought of a crazy patch, cut a large piece out of one of these damask curtains; consequently the governor has issued orders that no visitors shall be admitted, and the Yankees have gone down one notch further in the scale where they already, by their own conduct, hold a low position. It is to be hoped that those who come in the future may act so that no more shame will fall on us.

TABOO.--A FÊTE-DAY IN TAHITI.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Summer Cruising in the South Seas*, by Charles Warren Stoddard
1905

It was on one of those vagabond pilgrimages to nowhere in particular, such as every stranger is bound to make in a strange land, that I first stumbled upon my royal Jester, better known in Tahiti as Taboo.

Great Jove! what a night it was! A wild ravine full of banyan and pandanus trees, and of parasite climbers, and the thousand nameless leafing and blossoming creatures that intermarry to such an alarming extent in the free-loving tropics, had tempted me to pasture there for a little while. I was wandering on among roots and trailing branches, and under ropes upon ropes of flowers that seemed to swing suddenly across my path on purpose to keep me from finding too easily the secret heart of the mountain. I felt it was right that I should be made to realize how sacred a spot that sanctuary of Nature was, but I fretted somewhat at the persistency of those speechless sentinels who guarded its outer door so faithfully. There was a waterfall within that I had prayed to see,--one of those mysterious waterfalls that descend noiselessly from the bosom of a cloud, stealing over cushions of moss, like a ray of light in a dream, or something else equally intangible.

You never find this sort of waterfall in the common way. No one can exactly point it out to you; but you must search for it yourself, and listen for its voice,--and usually listen in vain,--till, suddenly, you come upon it in a moment, almost as if by accident; and its whole quivering length glitters and glistens with jewels, where it hangs, like a necklace, on the bosom of a great cliff. It is the only visible chain that binds earth to heaven; and no wonder you gaze at it with questioning eyes!

Well, while I was looking about me, expecting every moment to feel the damp breath of the waterfall upon my forehead, night came down. Where was I? In the midst of a pathless forest; between cliffs whose sleek, mossy walls were so steep as to forbid even the goat's sharp hoof. Down the hollow of the ravine, among round, slippery rocks, and between trellises of giant roots, tumbled a mountain torrent. No human form visible, probably none to be looked for on that side of the inaccessible dome of the mountain; yet fearlessly I toiled on, knowing that food and shelter were on every side, and that no hand, whose clasp was as fervent as the clasp of the vine itself, would be raised against me; and, thank Heaven! outsiders were scarce.

In the midst of the narrowing chasm, with the night thickening, and the wood growing more and more objectionable, I heard a sound as of stumbling feet before me. My first thought was of _colour_! I would scarcely trust a white man in that predicament. What well-disposed White would be prowling, like a wild animal, alone in a forest at night? It occurred to me that I was white, or had passed as such; but I know and have always known that, inwardly, I am purple-blooded, and

stipple-limbed, and invisibly tattooed after the manner of my lost tribe! I was startled at the sound, and slackened my pace to listen: the footsteps paused with mine. I plunged forward, accusing the echoes of playing me false. Again the mysterious one rushed awkwardly on before me, with footfalls that were not like mine, nor like any that I could trace: they were neither brute nor human, but fell clumsily among the roots and stones, out of time with me; therefore, no echo, and beyond my reckoning entirely.

At this hour the moon, of a favourable size, looked over the cliff, flooding the chasm with her soft light. I rejoiced at it, and hoped for a revelation of the Unknown, whose tottering steps had mocked mine for half an hour.

Here we were in a forest of bread-fruit trees. Scarcely a ray of light penetrated their thick-woven branches; but, against the faint light of the open distance, I marked the weird outline of one who might once have been human, but was no longer a tolerable image of his Maker. The figure was like the opposite halves of two men bodily joined together in an amateur attempt at human grafting. The trunk was curved the wrong way; a great shoulder bullied a little shoulder, and kept it decidedly under; a long leg walked right around a short leg that was perpetually sitting itself down on invisible seats, or swinging itself for the mere pleasure of it. One arm clutched a ten-foot bamboo about three inches in diameter, and wielded it as though it were a bishop's crook, and something to be proud of; the other arm--it must have belonged to a child when it stopped growing--was hooked up over one ear, looking as though it had been badly wired by some medical student, and was worn as a lasting reproach to him. A shaggy head was set on the down-slope of the big shoulder, and seemed to be continually looking over the little shoulder and under the little arm for some one always expected, but who was very long in coming.

Upon this startling discovery I turned to flee, but the figure immediately followed. It was evidently too late to escape an interview, and, taking heart, I walked toward it, when, to my amazement, it hastily staggered away from me, looking always over its shoulder, quickening its pace with mine, slackening its speed with me, and keeping, or seeking to keep, within a certain distance of me all the while. My curiosity was excited, and, as I saw it bore me no ill-will, I made a quick plunge forward, hoping to capture it. With an energetic effort it strove to escape me; but, with the head turned the wrong way, it stumbled blindly into a bit of jungle, where it lay whining piteously. I assisted it to its feet, with what caution and tenderness I could, and, finding it still wary, walked on slowly, leading the way to the edge of the grove, where the moonlight was almost as radiant as the dawn. It followed me like a dog, and was evidently grateful for my company. I walked slowly that it might not stumble, and, as we emerged from the shadow of the bread-fruits, I manoeuvred so as to bring its face toward the moonlight, and I saw--a hideous visage, with all its features sliding to one corner; and nothing but the two soft, sleepy-looking eyes saved me from yielding to the disgust that its whole presence awakened. As it was, I involuntarily started back with a shudder, and a slight

exclamation that attracted its attention. "Taboo! Taboo!" moaned the poor creature, half in introduction, half in apology and explanation.

He was well named the "forbidden one": set apart from all his fellows; incapable of utterance; maimed in body; an outcast among his own people; homeless, yet at home everywhere; friendless, though welcomed by all for his entertaining and ludicrous simplicity; feeding, like the birds, from Nature's lap, and, like the birds, left to the winds and waters for companionship.

Somehow I felt that Taboo could lead me at once to the waterfall; and I tried to seek out the small door to his brain, and impress him with my anxiety to reach the place. O, what darkness was there, and what doubts and fears seemed to cloud the hidden portals of his soul! He made an uncouth noise for me. Perhaps he meant it as music: it was frightful to hear it up there in the mountain solitudes. He got me fruits and a little water in the palm of his hand, which he expected me to drink with a relish. He lay down at my feet in a broken heap of limbs, crooning complacently. He was playful and thoughtful alternately; at least, he lost himself in long silences from time to time, while his eyes glowed with a deep inward light, that almost made me hope to startle his reason from its dreadful sleep; but a single word broke the spell, and set him to laughing as though he would go all to pieces; and his joy was more pitiful than his sorrow.

In one of his silent moods he suddenly staggered to his feet, and shambled into a narrow trail to one side of the gorge. I wondered at his unexpected impulse, and feared that he had grown tired of me already, preferring the society of his feathered comrades, a few of whom sounded their challenge-note, that soared like silver arrows in the profound stillness of the ravine. It seemed not, however: in a few moments he returned, and signalled me with his expressive grunt, and I followed him. Through thickets of fern, arching high over our heads, down spongy dells, and over rims of rock jutting from the base of the mountain, Taboo and I clambered in the warm moonlight. Anon we came upon a barricade of bamboos, growing like pickets set one against another. I know not how broad the thicket might have been,--possibly as broad as the ravine itself,--but into the thick of it Taboo edged himself; and close upon his heels I followed. In a few moments we had crushed our way through the midst of the bamboos, that clashed together after us so that a bird might not have tracked us, and lo! a crystal pool in the heart of a wonderful garden; and to it, silently, from heaven itself descended that mysterious waterfall, whose actual existence I had seriously begun to question. It lay close against the breast of the mountain, strangely pale in the full glow of the moon, while, like a vein of fire, it seemed to throb from end to end; or like a shining thread with great pearls slipping slowly down its full length, taking the faint hues of the rainbow as they fell, playing at prisms, until my eyes, weary of watching, closed of their own accord. I sank down by Taboo, who was sleeping soundly in the hollow of a great tree; and the one cover for both of us was the impenetrable shadow that is never lifted from that silent sanctuary of the Most High.

The sky was as saffron when we woke from our out-of-door sleep, and the whole atmosphere was less poetical and impressive than on the night previous. Stranger than all else, there was no visible trace of the mysterious waterfall. I even began to question my own senses, and thought it possible that I had been dreaming. Yet there sat Taboo in his frightful imperfection, as happy and indifferent as possible. Of course he could tell me nothing of the magical waters. He had doubtless already forgotten the episode of the hour previous. He lived for the solitary moment, and his mind seemed unable to grasp the secrets of ten seconds on either side of his narrow present. In fact, he was playing with a splendid lizard when I returned from my brief and fruitless reconnoissance; and as I came up he wondered at me, as he never ceased to wonder, with fresh bewilderment, whenever I came back to him, after never so brief an absence.

I soon learned to play upon Taboo's one stop; to point a finger at him, and bore imaginary auger-holes right into him anywhere; for he always winced and whined, like a very baby, and yielded at once to my pantomimic suggestion. But what a wreck was here! A delicate instrument, full of rifts and breakages, with that single key readily answerable to the slightest touch of my will. I have often wished that it had been a note more deep, profound, or sympathetic. It was simply merry and shrill, and incapable of any modulation whatever. Point a finger at him, make a few coils in the air that grow to a focus as they draw nearer to him, and he would run over with uncontrollable jollity that was at times a little painful in its boisterousness.

I knew well enough that I had sucked the honey from that particular cell in the mountain, and that I might as well resume my pilgrimage. There was to be a _Fête Napoléon_ in Papeete. We hadn't heard, up to that hour, of the wreck of the great Empire, and, being in a loyal French colony, it behoved us to have the very best time possible. Said I to myself, "Taboo will find sufficient food for merriment in our mode _fêting_ an Emperor; therefore Taboo shall go with me to town and enjoy himself." I suggested an immediate adjournment to Papeete with the tip of my forefinger, whereat Taboo doubled up, as usual, and, in his own fashion, implored me to stop being so funny. We at once started; returning through the bamboo-brakes, fording the stream in some awkward way, and slowly working our passage back to town.

The Tahitians have but one annual holiday. As this, however, is seventy-two hours in length, while everything relating to it is broad in proportion, it is about as much as they can conscientiously ask for.

Taboo and I entered the town on the eve of the first day, together with multitudes from the neighbouring districts, flocking thither in their best clothes. The lovely bay of Papeete was covered with fleets of canoes, hailing from all the seaside villages on the island, and many of them from Moorea, and islands even more distant. No sea is too broad to be compassed by an ambitious Kanack, who scents a festival from afar.

Along the crescent shores of the bay, the canoes were heaped, tier upon tier. It was as though a whole South Sea navy had been stranded, for the

town was crowded with canoe-boys and all manner of natives, in gala dress. The incessant rolling of drums, the piping of bamboo-flutes, and the choruses of wandering singers began early in the dawn of the 14th August, and were expected to continue, uninterruptedly, to the evening of the 16th. Taboo regarded it all with singular indifference. Everybody seemed to know him, and to take particular delight in greeting him. His sleepy disregard of them was considered extremely laughable, and they went their way roaring with merriment, that contrasted strongly with the grave, listless face of the simple one, who was apparently oblivious of everything.

The morning after we appeared in Papeete was Sunday, according to the calendar. The little cathedral, with banana-leaves rustling in the open windows, was thronged with worshippers of all colours, doubly devout in the excessive heat. Various choirs relieved one another during Mass, and some diminutive fellows, under ten years of age, chanted Latin hymns in a pleasingly plaintive voice, led by a friar in long clothes and a choker. Taboo crouched by the open door during service, raking the gravel-walk with his crooked fingers, and hitching about with indefatigable industry. After the last gospel, we all went into the middle of the street--for there were no sidewalks--and got our boots very dusty. Little knots of friends seemed to sit down in the way wherever they pleased, and to talk as long as they liked; while everybody else accommodately turned out for them, or paused, and listened to the conversation, without embarrassment on either side. Liquor was imbibed on the sly; some eyes were beginning to swim perceptibly, and some tongues to wag faster and looser than ever. The Admiral's flag-ship was one pyramid of gorgeous bunting, and his band delighted a great audience, gathered upon the shore, with a matinée gratis. At sunset the imperial batteries belched their sulphurous thunder, that came as near to breaking the Sabbath as possible. In the evening more music, up at the Governor's garden,--waltzes, polkas, and quadrilles, so brilliantly executed that the listeners were half mad with delight; and you couldn't for the life of you tell what day it had been, nor what night it was, but Sunday was positively set down against it in the calendar. At ten p.m. a signal-gun says "Good-night" to the citizens of Papeete, and it behoves all those who are dark-skinned to retire instantly, on pain of arrest and a straw-heap in the calaboose.

In the midst of our Sunday festival, while yet the streets were hilarious, slap-bang went this impudent piece of ordnance, and at once the crowd began to disperse in the greatest confusion. Taboo, who had been an inanimate spectator during the day's diversions, seemed to comprehend the necessity of hasty flight to some quarter or other; and, with a confusion of ideas peculiar to him, he began careering in great circles through the swaying multitude, and continued to revolve around an uncertain centre, until I seized him and sought to pilot him to some convenient place of shelter. I thought of the great market, that, like those ancient cities of refuge, was always open to the benighted wanderer; and thither we hastened. A lofty roof, covering a good part of a block, kept the rain from a vast enclosure, stored with stalls, tables, and benches. It was simply shelter of the barest kind, but sufficient for all needs in that charitable climate. There was a buzzing

of turbulent throngs as we edged our way toward the centre of the market-place; you would think that all the bees of Tahiti were swarming in unison, from the noise thereof. The commotion was long in quieting. It had to subside like the sea at flood-tide. Every little while a brace of _gendarmes_ strutted past the premises, feeling mighty fine in their broad white pants, like a ship with studding-sails out, and with those comical bobtails sprouting out of the small of their backs. I know that Taboo and I, having laid ourselves on somebody's counter, listened and nudged each other for two or three hours, and that it began to feel like morning before there was sleep enough to go entirely around the establishment.

The man who is the first to wake in Papeete lights his lamp and goes to market. As soon as he makes his untimely appearance, the community begins to stir; a great clatter of drowsy voices and dozens of yawns are the symptoms of returning day; and in ten minutes the market is declared open, though it is still deep and tranquil starlight overhead, with not a trace of dawn as yet visible.

When the market opens before 3 a.m.--and the hour happens to be the blackest of the four-and-twenty--it is highly inconvenient for any foreigner and his royal jester who may be surreptitiously passing the night upon one of the fruit counters, but there is no help for them: sleepy heads give way to fresh-gathered bread-fruits and nets of fragrant oranges; bananas are swung up within tempting reach of everybody; all sorts of natives come in from the four quarters of the Papeetean globe, with back-loads of miscellaneous viands, a mat under one arm, and a flaming torch in hand. Rows upon rows of girls sell fruits and flowers to the highest bidder; withering old women haggle over the prices of their perfumed and juicy wares; solitary men offer their solitary strings of fish for a _real_ each, and refuse to be beaten down by any wretch of a fellow who dares to insinuate that the fish are a trifle too scaly; boys sit demure over their meagre array of temptations in the shape of six tomatoes, three eggs, a dozen or so of guavas, and one cucumber. These youngsters usually sit with a passionless countenance that forbids any hope of a bargain at reduced prices, and they pass an hour or two with scarce a suggestion of custom; but it is suddenly discovered that they have something desirable, and a dozen purchasers begin quarrelling for it, during which time some one else quietly makes his purchase from one corner of the boy's mat; and, having closed out his stock in less than ten minutes, he quietly pockets his _reals_, and departs without having uttered a syllable.

Taboo and I went from one mat to another, eyeing the good things for breakfast. I offered him the best that the market afforded; and I could easily do so, for in no land is the article cheaper or better. Taboo, having made the circuit of the entire establishment, upon mature deliberation concluded to take nothing. At every point he was greeted uproariously by the noisy and good-natured people, who were willing to give him anything he might choose to take. They, probably, felt that it was worth more than the price of the article to see the sublime scorn on the poor fellow's face as he declined their limes, _feis_, mangoes, or whatever delicious morsel it might have been. As for me, I couldn't

resist those seductions. I made my little purchases and withdrew to the seaside, where I could break my fast by sunrise, and enjoy comparative quiet. Taboo grinned in the market-place till he was weary of the applause showered upon him by the ungodly, who made light of his irreparable misfortune and took pleasure in his misery. He hunted me up, or, rather, stumbled upon me again, and stayed by me, amusing himself with pelting the fish that sported, like sunbeams and prisms, in the sea close at our feet.

It was _fête_-day in Tahiti. I sat, at sunrise, by the tideless margin of a South Sea lagoon, bristling with coral and glittering with gem-like fish. In either hand I held a mango and banana. I raised the mango to my lips. What a marvel it was! A plump vegetable egg, full of delusion, and staffed with a horny seed nearly as large as itself. It had a fragrance as of oils and syrups; it purged sweet-scented and resinous gums. Its hide was, perhaps, too tough for convenience, but its inner lusciousness tempted me to persevere in the consumption of it. With much difficulty I broke the skin. Honey of Hymettus! It seemed as though the very marrow of the tropics were about to intoxicate my palate. Alas, for the hopes of youthful inexperience! What was so fair to see proved but a meagre mouthful of saturated wool; that colossal and horny seed asserted itself everywhere. The more I strove to handle it with caution, the more slippery and unmanageable it became. It shot into my beard, it leaped lightly into my shirt-bosom, and skated over the palms of both hands. Small rivulets of liquor trickled down my sleeves, making disagreeable puddles at both elbows. My fingers were webbed together in a glutinous mass. My whole front was in a shocking state of smear. My teeth grew weary of combing out the beguiling threads of the fruit. The thing seemed, to my imagination, a small, flat head, covered with short, blond hair, profusely saturated with some sweet sort of ointment, that I had despaired of feasting on; and I was not sorry when the slippery stone sprang out of my grasp, and peppered itself with sea-sand.

I knew that there still remained to me a morsel that was of itself fit food for the gods. I poised aloft, with satisfaction, the rare-ripe banana, beautiful to the eye as a nugget of purest gold. The pliant petals were pouting at the top of the fruit. I readily turned them back, forming a unique and convenient gilded salver for the column of flaky manna that was, as yet, swathed in lace-like folds. These gauzy ribbons fell from it almost of their own accord, and hung in fleecy festoons about it.

Here was a repast of singularly appropriate mould, being about the size of a respectable mouth, and containing just enough mouthfuls to temporarily satisfy the appetite. Not a morsel of it but was full of mellowness, and sweet flavour, and fragrance. Not an atom of it was wasted; for, no sooner had I thrown aside the cool, clean, flesh-like case, than it was made way with by a fowl, that had, no doubt, been patiently awaiting that abundant feast.

Mangoes and bananas! Their very names smack of shady gardens, that know no harsher premonition of death than the indolent and natural decay of all things. The nostril is excited with the thought of them; the palate

grows moist and yearns for them; and the soul feasts itself, for a moment, with a memory of mangoes and bananas past, whose perfection was but another proof of immortality, since it is impossible ever to forget them individually. Mangoes and bananas! the prime favourites at Nature's most bountiful board; the realization of a dream of the orchards of the Hesperides; alike excellent, yet so vastly dissimilar in their excellences, it seems almost incredible that the same beneficent Providence can have created the two fruits!

It was the memorable 15th of August, 1870; but I have reason to believe that the bananas were no better on that particular occasion than almost always in their own latitude. The 15th of August,--where was the Emperor then? I forget; I know that we rejoiced in the blissful confidence that we were to have a grand time at all hazards. There were guns at sunrise from ship and shore; a grand national procession of French and Tahitians to High Mass at 10.30; guns--twenty-one of them--together with the ringing of bells, and a salute of flags, at the elevation of the Host, so that you would have known the supreme moment had you been miles away. Then came a sumptuous public breakfast for the Frenchmen; and, for the natives, games of several sorts.

Taboo and I, having properly observed the more solemn ceremonials of the day, gave ourselves up to the full enjoyment of these latter diversions. There was a greased pole, with shining cups; and flowing prints, both useful and ornamental, hung at the top of it. Several naked and superbly built fellows shinned up it with infinite difficulty, and were so fatigued when they got there, they were only too willing to clutch the first article within reach, which was, of course, the least desirable, and scarcely worth the trouble of getting. O, such magnificent grouping at the foot of the pole, as the athletes shouldered one another in a sort of co-operative experiment at getting up sooner; such struggles to rise a little above the heads of the impatient climbers beneath as made the aspiring Kanack quite pale--that is, greenish yellow; such losing of grips, and fainting of hearts, and slidings back to earth in the midst of taunts and jeers, but all in the best of humours and the hottest of suns! such novelties as these were a very great delight to Taboo and myself. He, however, didn't deign to laugh heartily: he merely smiled in a superior manner that seemed to imply that he knew of something that was twice as much fun and not half the trouble, but he didn't choose to disclose it. He nearly always seemed to know as much as any ten of us; and it was like an assumption of innocence, that queer, vacant expression of his face. I'm not sure that he was not possessed of some rare instinct beyond our comprehension, which was to him an abundant compensation for the fragmentary body he was obliged to trundle about.

Early in the afternoon, there were fresh arrivals in the bay: two mammoth double war-canoes, of fifty paddles each, came in from a remote sea-district; they were the very sort of water-monsters that went out to greet my illustrious predecessor, Captain Cook, nearly a century ago. Taboo and I were only too glad to sit meekly among the ten thousand spectators that blackened the great sweep of the shore, while these savages matched their prowess. With one vigorous plunge of the paddles the canoes sprang from the beach into the watery arena. How strange they

looked! Long, low sides, scarce eight inches above water, and stained like fish-scales; big, yawning jaws in their snakelike heads, and the tail of a dragon in their wakes; every man of the hundred stripped to the skin and bareheaded; their brawny bodies glistening in the sun as though they had been oiled, while, with mechanical accuracy, the crews beat the water with their paddles, and chanted their guttural chants, with the sea gashing and foaming under them. The race was a tie; perhaps it was fortunate that it proved so. I fear if one crew had beaten the other crew the breadth of a paddle, that other would have lain to and eaten that one right under our very eyes. They had their songs of triumph, both sounding the chorus, during which they drummed with their paddles on the sides of their canoes, till the frail things shivered and groaned in genuine misery. Then they renewed the race, because they couldn't possibly be still for a moment; and they looked like a brace of mastodon centipedes trying to get out of the water, with death hissing in their throats.

The evening of the great day was drawing to a close. Taboo and I again went out into the narrow, green lanes of Papeete, seeking what we might devour with all our eyes and ears. They were very charming, those long arbours of densely leaved trees, with little tropical vignettes set in the farther end of them. It was almost like getting a squint through the wrong end of a telescope, pointed toward some fairy-land or other. As it grew dark, a thousand ready hands began illuminating the avenues that lead to the Governor's house. Up and down its deep verandah swung ropes of lanterns; and as the guards at the garden-gate presented arms at the approach of the Admiral, or some distinguished and decorated foreigner, the strains of Strauss, deliciously played, filled the illuminated grove with an air of romance that was very Oriental in its mellowness, and quickened every foot that was so happy as to touch the soil of Tahiti in so fortunate an hour. On every part of the public lawns the revels were conducted after the native fashion. Bands of singers and dancers sang and danced in the streets, and were frequently rewarded with liberal potations. Taboo looked on as amiably as usual, and for some time as passively also; but there was something intoxicating in the air, and it began to have a visible effect upon him. It was not long before he strove to emulate the singers. St. Cecilia! what a song was his! I could scarcely endure to hear that royal jester striving to tune his inharmonious voice to the glib though monotonous Tahitian madrigals. I walked away by myself, or rather went into another part of the village, and sought a change of scene; for there was no seclusion to be hoped for on a _fête_-night.

From the Governor's halls came the entrancing harmony of flutes and harps; from every lane and alley the piping of nose-fifes and the droning of nasal chorals; from the sea rolled in the deep, hoarse booming of the reef, the rhythmical splash of oars, or the clear, prolonged cry of some one in the watery distance hailing some one close at hand. Even so savage and picturesque a spectacle as this grew wearisome after a time, and I turned my steps toward a place of shelter, and suggested to myself sleep.

In one lane was a throng of natives, wilder in their demonstrations of

joy than all the others. My curiosity was excited, and I hastened to join them. Having with some difficulty wedged my way into the front row of spectators, I beheld the subject of their riotous applause. In the centre of a small ring was an ungainly figure, writhing in grotesque contortions; tom-toms were being beaten with diabolical energy and wildness; flutes and shrill voices were chiming in rapid and bewildering chromatics; the audience--the half-crazed and utterly inhuman audience--gloated over the shocking spectacle with devilish delight. In one moment I comprehended all: Taboo, overcome by the general and unusual excitement, had succumbed to its depraving influences; and, unable longer to control himself, he was broadly burlesquing, in his helplessness, one of the national dances. Music had at last reached his impenetrable soul, awakened his long-slumbering sympathies, and found him her willing slave. A pity that some diviner strain had not first led him captive, that he might have been spared this disgrace!

I saw his unhappy body ambling to the shame of all. I saw those pitiful, unshapen shoulders undulating in vain attempts at passional expression; the helpless arm waving at every movement of the body, while the withered hand spun like a whirligig above his ears; his eyes, having lost their accustomed mild light, stared distractedly about, seeking rescue and protection, as I thought. In a few moments I attracted his notice, though he seemed but partly to recognize me. There was his usual uncertain recognition grown more doubtful,--nay, even hopeless,--as his face betrayed. Again I caught his eye: I felt that but one course was left me, and at once I aimed my finger at him. He winced in his delirious dance. I coiled it round and round, weaving airy circle within circle; quicker and quicker I wove my spell, and at last shot the whole hand at him, as though I would run him through. He doubled, like one struck with a fatal blow, and went to the ground all of a senseless heap. There was a disturbance in the audience. Some of them thought I had bewitched Taboo; and it behoved me to go at once, rather than seek to make explanation of the singular result of my presence there. I went, and spent a dull night, accusing myself of being the possible spiritual murderer of Taboo. I had no business to bring him to the metropolis at that unfortunate season; I had no right to leave him with his traducers: and that was the whole statement of the case.

The last day of the _fête_ was, of course, less joyous to me. A score of nameless nags were to be ridden by light-weights in breech-cloths; and I sought consolation in the prospect of seeing some bewitching horsemanship. The track, in use but once every twelvemonth, and yielding annually a young orchard of guava trees, presented to the astonished gaze of the foreign sporting gentleman who happened to be on the ground--if, indeed, there was such an one present--a half-mile course, with numerous stones and hollows relieving its surface, while the rope that enclosed it kept giving way every few moments, letting in a mixed multitude among the half-broken horses.

The Queen was present at the races,--Pomare, whose life has been one long, sorrowful romance; the Admiral was also there; and many a petty officer, with abundant guilt and tinsel. At a signal from the trumpeter the horses were entered unannounced, and everybody betted wildly. One

little African jockey, mounted upon the cleverest piece of flesh and blood in the field, called for the larger stakes; and he would certainly have won, but for an unavoidable accident: the little African was pressing in on the home-stretch, and everything looked lovely for the winning mare, when, unluckily, she put her nigh leg in a crab hole, and snapped her shin-bone square off. The undaunted little African tried his best to finish the heat on his own responsibility, and went off into the air in fine style, but missed his calculation, and burrowed about three lengths from the goal. His neck was driven in nearly up to the ears, and the mare had to be shot; but the races went mercilessly on until a tremendous thunder-storm flooded the track and washed the population back to town. Dance after dance consumed the afternoon hours; and song upon song, eternally reiterated, finally failed to create any special enthusiasm.

I saw no further traces of Taboo. Again and again I followed knots of the curious into the larger native houses, where the lascivious dances were given with the utmost _abandon_; thither, I suspected, Taboo would most likely be impelled, for the music was wilder and the applause more boisterous and unrestrained.

The evening of the last day of the _fête_ was darkening; most people were growing a little weary of the long-drawn festivities; many had succumbed to their fatigue, and slept by the wayside, or, it may be, they had known too well the nature of the Tahitian juices, such as no man may drink and not fall.

The palace of Pomare--a great, hollow, incomplete shell, whose windows have never been glazed, and whose doors have never been hung--was the scene of the concluding ceremonials of the season. The long verandahs were thickly hung with numberless paper lanterns, swinging continually in the soft night winds that stole down from the starlit slopes of Fautahua; the broad lawns in front of the palace were blocked out in squares, like the map of a liliputian city. Each one of these plats was set apart for a band of singers, and there were as many bands as districts in Tahiti and Moorea, together with delegations from islands more remote. Soon the choruses began to assemble. Choirs of fifty voices each, male and female, led by tight-headed drums and screaming fifes, drew towards the palace gardens, and were formally admitted by the proper authorities, who were very much swollen with the pomp of office, and, perhaps, a little sprinkle of the exhilarating accompaniments of the season. One after another the white-robed processions approached--each fresh arrival looking more like the chorus in "Norma" than the last, though it then seemed impossible that any Druid could presume to appear more gracefully ghostlike. Each singer wore a plume of cocoa leaves, whose feathers were more lovely than the downy wands of the ostrich. They were made of knots of long, slender ribbons, softer than satin, veined like clouded silver, as transparent as the clearest isinglass, and as delicate as the airiest gauze.

Out of the core of the palm tree, in the midst of its rich, dark mass of foliage, springs a tuft of leaves as tender as the first sprouts of a lily bulb. These budding leaves are carefully removed, split edgewise,

and the enamelled sheets laid open to the sun; then, with the thumb-nail, passed skilfully over the inner surface, a filmy membrane is separated, and spread in the air to dry. A single tree yields but a small cluster of these pale, cloud-like leaves, scarcely a handful in all, yet the tree withers when they pluck the heart of it. It is the very soul of the southern palm, with every life spiritualized, and looking vapoury as tangible moonlight.

The leader of the concert having challenged the choruses from the verandah of the palace, at once twenty choirs struck into their particular anthem with the utmost zeal. A discord about six acres in extent was the result. It seemed as though each choir was seeking whom it might drown out with superior vocal compass and volume. With much difficulty the several bands of singers were persuaded to await their turn for a _solo_ effort that might be listened to with no small degree of pleasure. From time to time, during the entire evening, some obstreperous chorus would break loose, spite of every precaution; and it had always to sing itself out before order could be restored. Taboo would have thoroughly enjoyed these two thousand singers, each singing his or her favourite roundelay, independent of all laws of time and melody. He might have been there, as it was, offering his inharmonious chant with the mob of contestants.

By the time the series of prize-songs had been sung, the sky grew cloudy, and the torches began to flicker in the increasing wind; a few great drops of rain spat down in the midst of the singers, and the reef moaned loudly, like the baying of signal guns. It was ominous of coming storms. At the climax of a choral revolution, in which every man's voice seemed raised against his neighbour's, a roar as of approaching armies was heard mingled with the accompanying crash of artillery. A sudden puff of wind extinguished the major part of the torches, and wrecked many of the lanterns in the palace porch. It was simply a tropical shower in all its magnificence; but it was enough! The _fête_ concluded then and there in the promptest manner. The narrow streets of Papeete were clogged with retreating hosts, who continually shouted a sort of general adieu to everybody, as they gathered their skirts about them, and, with shoes in hand, turned their bare feet homeward.

Since the end had at last come, and I had no further claims upon the people, nor the people upon me,--if, indeed, either of us were ever anything in particular to one another,--I drifted with the majority, and soon found myself in the suburban wilderness that girdles the small capital of the queendom. I wandered on till the noise of the revellers grew more and more indistinct. They were scattering themselves over the length and breadth of the island, carrying their songs with them. Now and then a fresh gust of wind bore down to me an echo of a refrain that had grown familiar during the days of the _fête_, and will not soon be forgotten; but the past was rapidly fading, and the necessities of the future began to present themselves with unusual boldness. Instinctively I turned into the winding trail that once before had led me toward that mysterious mountain sacristy, over whose font fell the spiritual and dream-like rivulet whose baptismal virtues Taboo and I had sought together. I felt certain that I could find it without guidance; for the

broken clouds let slip such floods of moonlight as made day of darkness, and rendered the smallest landmark easily distinguishable.

I paused for rest in the bread-fruit grove where first I met with my weird companion. Presently I resumed my pilgrimage, wending my way toward the slender path that led through fern, forest, and bamboo-jungle, to the crystal lake and waterfall. In vain I sought it; the slightest traces of the trail seemed obliterated. I wandered up and down the winding way, till I was in despair of finding the slightest clue to the mystery. I sat down and thought how a slight accident of forgetfulness was lending a sense of enchantment to the whole valley, when I heard a stumbling step, too marked to be soon forgotten. I crept into a shadow, and awaited the approach of the solitary wanderer. How he tottered as he drew near! He seemed to have lost part of his small skill since I last saw him. He was laughing quietly to himself while he journeyed: perhaps some memory of the fête still pleased him. He passed me, unconscious of my presence. I ran cautiously, and followed him at a safe distance. We threaded the old path, by stream and cliff and brake, and, after a little, reached the secluded and silent borders of the lake. Once or twice he had heard me as I brushed past the bamboos or a twig snapped under foot, but those forest-sounds scarcely disconcerted him; he was too well used to them. He paused at the margin of the lake, stooped awkwardly and drank of it, went a little to one side where an outlet fed the torrent we had forded some distance down the valley, and there he bathed. Having started once or twice, as though with some remembered and definite purpose, he paused a moment or two, looked about him helplessly, and returned to the foot of the great tree where we slept the first night of our acquaintance.

There was a faint suggestion of the fall across the sombre breast of the cliff opposite, but whether it were real or a delusion, I could scarcely determine. Taboo was soon asleep among the roots of the banyan; and I, weary of seeking some revelation of the island mysteries, lay down near him, and gradually sank into unconsciousness. Once in the night I awoke: the clouds had blown over, and the moon was more resplendent than I ever remember to have seen it. Out on the mossy rim of the lake stood Taboo, gazing wistfully upon the mountains. Instinctively my eyes followed his, and there I beheld the waterfall in all its glory, leaping, like a ray of light, from the bosom of the sky. I could scarcely determine whether or no it really fell into the lake, for the foliage about its shores was too profuse. It flashed like handfuls of diamond-dust thrown into the light, and descended as noiselessly and airily as vapour.

The clouds soon gathered again. I slept, overcome with weariness; and when I awoke at dawn, Taboo was missing, as well as all traces of the fall. This, however, scarcely surprised me, for I had grown to look upon it as some lunar effect that came and went with the increasing or decreasing splendour of the moon; or it might have been the short-lived offspring of the showers that sweep over the island at uncertain intervals. It was probably the only dramatic result to be looked for in the career of Taboo. You never can depend upon one of those veering minds, whose north-star has burned out in oblivion. I believe it was his destiny to disappear with that rainbow, and, perhaps, return with it

when the fall should noiselessly steal down the mountain once more.

He may have had an object in secreting himself for a season; perhaps he was renewing his youthful innocence in some more solitary spot. He may have gone apart to laugh by the hour at the folly of those foreigners who _fête_ a disgraced emperor; or was he making his queer noises to hear the queerer echoes that came back to him, and all the while caring no more for life or death than a parrot or a magpie, or even a poor, half-shapen soul,--one of those sacred idiots that have found worshippers before now, and never yet failed to awaken a chord of sympathy in the heart that is fashioned after the Divine pattern of the Son of God?

THE LEGAL STATUS OF FREE NEGROES AND SLAVES IN TENNESSEE

by WILLIAM LLOYD IMES.

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In 1790, the free colored population of Tennessee was 361, while the slave numbered 3,417.[1] In 1787, three years previous, Davidson County, which then, as now, comprised the most important and thickly settled part of the Cumberland Valley, had a population of 105 Negroes between the ages of 1 and 60.[2] Nashville was just a rough community in the wilderness with a few settlers from the older districts of the East, living in several hewed and framed log-houses and twenty or more rough cabins. The census of 1790 gives Davidson County 677 Negroes, a figure which compared with the 3,778 Negroes in the entire State at that enumeration, means that this frontier region had already grown important enough to draw to it nearly one-fifth of the Negro population of the commonwealth. In 1800, there were in the State 13,893 Negroes, of whom 3,104, or nearly one fourth, were in Davidson County. Thereafter, although the ratio between the county and State did not increase in favor of the county, still it kept up so that by 1850 Davidson had the largest Negro population of any county in the State. During the decade 1850-60 Shelby County, containing the important center, Memphis, gained the ascendancy in number of Negro inhabitants, which it has since that time maintained. The likely cause of this shifting was the steady growth of cotton-raising districts and their rapid expansion toward the West and South. A general intimidation of the Negroes of Nashville and vicinity occurred in 1856, probably having some influence on the decline of population for that period in question. This cause, however, is not sufficient to explain the constant superiority of numbers in the Southwestern Tennessee region thereafter.

As slavery expanded from this small territory into all parts of the State, the attitude of the people of the Commonwealth with respect to the nation and slavery at various times may be shown. After Tennessee had been ceded to the United States in 1790 by North Carolina, she had

a most unusual method of throwing off her territorial government for nearly three months in 1796, and existed in absolute independence for that period before being admitted into statehood by the Federal Government.[3] Nevertheless in the period of the Civil War this State was the last to secede and the first to comply with the terms of readmission. With respect to slavery the early attitude of Tennessee toward the national government was peculiar. The cession act of North Carolina provided: "That no regulation made or to be made by Congress shall tend to emancipate slaves." [4] Probably because of this fact Lincoln did not mention Tennessee in the Emancipation Proclamation.

Yet Tennessee did have a strong anti-slavery sentiment, beginning with the outspoken protest of some of the King's Mountain heroes, also expressing itself in the work of many petitioners to the State legislature in the period 1800-1820. Then in 1834, in the State constitutional convention of that year, the anti-slavery feeling developed to proportions little appreciable at the present day, since we know the general opposition to such feeling and sentiment. Any antagonism to a so strongly fixed social convention then meant unusual courage in the midst of a majority of persons of adverse opinion.

The burning question of human rights for the black inhabitants of the State still became more ardent as the years passed, and the signs of its greater intensity were clearly seen in the Anti-Slavery Convention which met in London in 1843. The chronicle of proceedings contains a speech of Joshua Leavitt of Boston, who made the interesting statement that "The people of East Tennessee, a race of hardy mountaineers, find their interests so little regarded by the dominant slave-holders of other parts of the state that they are taking measures to become a separate state. They are holding anti-slavery meetings, and meetings of political associations with great freedom, discussing their questions, rousing up the people and showing how slavery curses them, in order to bring them to the point of action." [5] At this time it was well known that both Tennessee and Kentucky were "exporting slaves largely." [6]

In 1820, Elihu Embree, [7] at Jonesboro, Tennessee, the county seat of Washington County, in the far eastern section, began to publish _The Emancipator_, an abolition journal. Later, there came from this same county a man who easily became the leader of anti-slavery sentiment in the Constitutional Convention of 1834 at Nashville, Matthew Stephenson. It may have been that as a young man Stephenson was fired with the zeal of Embree. The period of Embree's activity was also one of large interest in the North and South in behalf of emancipation. In this same year the Missouri Compromise was passed in the national legislature. The concessions made both by pro-slavery and anti-slavery adherents at this time show the relative strength of the two forces and the remarkable fact is that there could be such near-equality of fighting strength on both sides. [8] Tennessee seems to have had an epitome of this national situation within her borders. Not only the zealous work of Embree indicates this, but the general feeling of the people of eastern Tennessee toward slavery. It is interesting here to point out that _The Emancipator_ was the first abolition journal in

the United States.[9]

The outcome of this anti-slavery feeling in Tennessee was that when the State Constitutional Convention met at Nashville in 1834 to consider important changes in the Constitution of 1796, there was such an outburst of sentiment against slavery that it was only with considerable resistance of the pro-slavery convention delegates that the State did not abolish it by providing for the gradual emancipation of slaves over a period of twenty years, when all should have been emancipated.[10] So significant is the public opinion of that time in Tennessee history, and so well calculated to give large insight into the Negro's condition then in the State, that it will hardly be amiss in this paper to enter into a somewhat detailed discussion of the work of the convention, and the sentiments there displayed.

The legal enactments of the slave code of Tennessee prior to 1834 will give us the right perspective here. One of the earliest enactments of the commonwealth was the absolute denial to slaves of the right to own property. Property held by them, such as horses, cattle, or anything of personal value was to be sold and one half of the proceeds given to the informer, the other half to the county.[11] Another law forbade the slave to go about armed unless he was the huntsman of the plantation. Small penalties were provided.[12] Still another made it unlawful for slaves to sell "any article whatever without permission from owner or overseer." The penalty for breaking this law was a maximum of "39 lashes on his, her, or their bare backs." [13] Many other matters were rigidly prescribed in the early statutes, chiefly concerning the slave's right to go or not to go from place to place, and to conduct himself under certain circumstances. Among slaves perjury was punished by mutilation and whipping. The brutality of the former was all the more disgusting because defended by law.[14] The slaying of a black or mulatto slave, however, was actually deemed murder and made punishable with death. It has not yet been ascertained, as far as the writer knows, whether any white citizen of Tennessee was ever indicted under the provision of this law. We do have a case of a famous old slave-holder in a community not far from Nashville being tied to his gate post and severely whipped by his neighbors, because of his brutal murder of one of his slaves.[15]

In the early laws the "hiring of one's own time," for a slave, was expressly forbidden. This practice was that of the master's allowing a slave to purchase his time for a certain amount of money, usually paid per annum. The law forbidding it was later rather generally evaded, although we cannot be sure of the evasion during the years 1796-1834. But during the later decades of the period under discussion, especially from 1840-60, there is absolute agreement among the testimonies of ex-slaves that evasion was the rule and not the exception. Various forms of this law were later enacted, but the penalties were usually light, and it may have been this fact together with the case of evasion that caused the disregard of it to become general. An ex-slave of Wilson County explains that the usual method of evasion was the declaration of the employer of the slave that he had hired the slave from the slave's master. Sometimes the owner would

pretend to keep the wages of the slave, but really was holding them at the slave's disposal. In this way numbers of slaves bought themselves.

There were other laws affecting masters in regard to their treatment of their slaves and privileges of the latter. One provided that if the slave should steal food or clothing because ill-fed or destitute of apparel, the master should pay for the stolen property.[16] By the provisions of another, slaves were allowed to give testimony in trials of other slaves; the jurors, however, had to be "housekeepers" and "owners of slaves." [17] The beating or abuse of a slave without sufficient cause (no indication given as to what were the limits of "sufficient cause") was an indictable offence, and the person committing a crime of this sort was liable to the same penalties as for the commission of a similar offense on the body of a white person.[18]

Various laws of the early codes, 1813, 1819, 1829, restricting the slave from selling or vending articles under conditions apart from desire or knowledge of his owner are all evidence of his complete subjection by law to the will of his master, even in the smallest things and affairs of personal life, and disposal of belongings. Great care was taken to state specifically in these early laws that there should be no sale of liquor or any intoxicant to slaves.[19]

The provisions concerning larger questions of a slave's activity and privilege are all interesting, and it will be of value to regard, first of all, that for bringing slaves into the State. Slaves were not to be brought into Tennessee unless for use, or procured by descent, devise, or marriage.[20] This enactment was made in 1826, and prepared the way for far more severe measures later. The idea of all legislation of this nature argues clearly the discouragement of slavery as a prevailing institution, by means of preventing fresh importations for sale. Tennessee was not to be, if it could be prevented, a slave market, like Mississippi.

A citizen holding slaves might petition the county court and emancipate a slave. Bond and security were required of the owner, and the slave thus set at liberty became free to go where he chose provided that, if he became a pauper, he should be brought to the county in which he had been set free, and there taken care of at public expense.[21] But occasionally there would arise a situation which required special enactment of the legislature as in the instance of one, Pompey Daniels, a slave, who died before the emancipation of his two children, Jeremiah and Julius, whom he had purchased. This required a special act of the legislature, as there seems to have been no law covering such a case.[22] Years before, in 1801, there was enacted a law, giving power of emancipation to the owner, as we have just seen before, but not to any slave who might essay to deliver another from bondage.[23]

Once free, the Negro's status was rather precarious in some respects. He was required to have papers filled out by the clerk of the county in which he lived, specifying personal details and information

intended to identify the person thoroughly. He must without fail have these emancipation records with him at any time and place in order to prove his freedom. In 1831 a law was passed which made it obligatory for the slave to leave upon his emancipation, and persons intending to emancipate their slaves were then compelled to give bond for their speedy removal.[24] Another clause of the same law stipulates that free Negroes should not be allowed to enter the State.[25] Fine and imprisonment were specified as penalties for remaining in the State as long as twenty days. This was a reaction from the provisions of State laws of 1825 when free colored persons immigrating into the State might have papers of freedom registered there, when proof of their absolute freedom had been made. Before the enactment of 1831, the increase of free Negroes was not so actively discouraged by the State, and many having their residence there, the laws concerning this class were quite as important and nearly as well detailed as the provisions of the slave code.

Among the early laws is one exacting a penalty of \$500 fine for selling a "free person of color." [26] A free person imported and sold as a slave under the law might recover double the price of his sale from the seller, who might be held until he should give bond.[27] This marks a high degree of feeling of justice toward the freeman, and yet it is worthy of notice that this was not always adequate to obtaining actual justice. Record is given of three young colored men, seamen and free, "carried to Mobile and New Orleans in the steamer New Castle and taken ashore by the captain to the city prison on pretext of getting hemp for the vessel, but really taken by the captain to the city prison as his slaves and sold by the jailor to three persons who carried them into Tennessee." [28] It is further stated that these unfortunates remained in slavery. One, however, was freed by the diligent work of the Friends, who had agents in the South busy gathering information concerning slavery, and planning means of combating it.

The free person of color was exempted from military duty and from the payment of a poll-tax. In accordance with an amendment to the Public Works act of 1804, he was expected to give service on public roads and highways just as other citizens.[29] It is doubtful whether any freeman of color voted under the constitution of 1796, but it seems to have been possible. The new constitution of 1834 restricted the right of voting to "free men who should be competent witnesses against a white man in a court of justice." In the courts free Negroes were legal witnesses in certain cases among their own people, but might themselves be testified against by slaves, even, if the defendants were only freedmen.[30] Otherwise slaves were not allowed to be witnesses against free men of color. Writs of error were granted to both freemen and slaves.

There were numerous small observances regarding the personal conduct of freemen. Life was at best for them a strange and circumscribed affair. They were "neither bond nor free," and probably suffered more from the provisions of the law and their ambiguous position than did their slave brothers. The freeman was not to entertain any slave over

night in his home, or on the Sabbath. A small fine was the penalty.[31] Intermarriage of free persons and slaves without consent of the master of the slave was strictly forbidden. Breach of this law, also, was punishable by fine. There were penalties for whites and free Negroes alike for being in "unlawful assembly" with slaves. The word "unlawful" here seems to have had a special judicial meaning, signifying primarily for the purpose of instigating rebellion or insurrection. A law providing for voluntary enslavement of a free person of color, to any person whom he might choose, introduces a most interesting situation which probably indicates that there were more than a few free Negroes who preferred slavery to the condition of a creature living in a sort of limbo between freedom and bondage.

By an act of the legislature in 1819, encouragement was given to European immigrants to come into the State, with the idea that they would become home builders and land-tillers, and make good citizens. The colored population already had a general reputation for thrift, but the sentiment of racial sympathy in the white population just then favored more the immigrant. For a period the tide of public opinion was on this side, and it was considered best for the Negro to be taken in charge by the Tennessee Colonization Society. The State appropriated \$10 for every black man removed from the State, an expense finally sanctioned by a law of 1833.[32]

Two years prior to the year of the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834, Virginia in her State Legislature, had witnessed an exciting scene of debate on the question of slavery. In the District of Columbia, also, there was sent to Congress in the session of 1827-28 a petition requesting the "prospective abolition" of slavery in that district, and the repeal of certain laws authorizing the sale of runaways. Similarly in Tennessee the outbreak of antislavery sentiment, long fostered in the eastern part of the State, came into the Convention of 1834. The few details presented here concerning the convention show conclusively that there was a strong, even violent opposition to human slavery in the State. Certain representatives of counties from East Tennessee were conspicuous for their protest against the system, and maintained their convictions despite the failure to win their point at that time.

Many memorialists in the State had addressed the legislature on the question of emancipation both pro and con prior to the convention, and finally, in the convention, on June 18, Wm. Blount of Montgomery County, Northern Tennessee, offered a memorial that on the subject of slavery the General Assembly should have no power or authority to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves without the consent of their owners or without paying their owners.[33] The memorial further prayed that, the legislature should not discourage the foreign immigration into the State and that certain laws providing for the owners of slaves to emancipate them should be made with the restriction that beforehand such manumitted persons should be assuredly prevented from becoming a charge to any county.

There were presented other memorials respecting the slave population

at this time. Hess, of Gibson and Dyer counties, wanted no emancipation of slaves except by individual disposition of their masters as the latter saw fit, or at least never unless the price of the slave was paid, provided the master did not freely give manumission, and the good of the State seemed to demand the liberation of the slave. But memorials of a different sentiment also were coming in. On May 26, McNeal presented a memorial of sundry citizens of McMinn County, asking for the emancipation of slaves in Tennessee, and on the same date, Senter of Rhea County also brought a petition from "sundry citizens" of his district asking for emancipation.[34] On the 28th, a memorial was given by Stephenson of Washington County from citizens unhesitatingly favoring emancipation. It was read and tabled.

On May 30, Stephenson introduced a resolution to have a committee of thirteen, one from each congressional district "appointed to take in consideration the propriety of designating some period from which slavery shall not be tolerated in this state, and that all memorials on that subject that have or may be presented to the convention be referred to said committee to consider and report thereon." [35] This resolution passed without trouble.

Stephenson was conspicuous for adherence to emancipation principles. It will be observed that he came from Washington County, in the far eastern portion of the State, the region already famous for its declaration of enmity toward slavery within Tennessee borders especially. An article in the Knoxville Register of the year 1831, just a few years prior to this Nashville Convention, denounces slavery in no uncertain terms, but also grows bitter at the thought of free men of color even remaining in the State. "Shall Tennessee" it asks, "be made the receptacle of the vicious and desperate slave as well as the depraved and corrupting free man of color?" [36]

But while a great number of those of East Tennessee probably wanted the abolition of slavery in order to rid the State of all people of color, there were those who through their delegates expressed their opinions otherwise in this convention, as has been intimated in the three memorials from "sundry citizens" of Washington and McMinn and Rhea Counties. Finally, the report of the Committee of Thirteen was given by John A. McKinney, of Hawkins County. It will be noted as an exception to the rule that this representative of an eastern county did not vigorously stand for the emancipation of the slave, but in his report spoke at length to attempt the justification of the system prevailing at that time in the State. Some of the most interesting points of his argument are: that slavery is an evil, but hard to remove, that the physiognomy of the slave is the great barrier to successful adjustment socially as far as white citizens think and feel, that the condition of the free man of color is tragic, that beset with temptations, and denied his oath in a court of justice, he is unable to have wrongs of whites against him redressed, that any interference with slavery at this time would cause a speedy removal of Tennessee population since slave-owners would seek other States with their slaves, and that if Tennessee should free all her slaves, there would be a greater concentration of all the slaves of the United

States, giving slaves more advantage in case of uprising.

Since the slave population in 1830 was 142,530, a fair estimate for 1834 would be 150,000, and this host of newly-made freedmen, thought he, would jeopardize the social safety of the white population of Tennessee, and incite the slave inhabitants of adjoining States to sedition. Slavery would not always exist, he believed, but Tennessee could abolish it then without dire results. Colonization was difficult, but possible and practicable.

This report was given on June 19. A few days later a motion was made by a Bedford County delegate to strike out that part of the report referring to the condition of the free man of color as "tragic." This did not prevail. Still later Stephenson in a set speech protested vigorously against the acceptance of the report of the Committee of Thirteen. He declared that the report was "an apology for slavery," and did not show the convention willing to discharge its duty to the memorialists, and to the people whose protests could not there be heard. His principal argument was that the principles guiding this committee in its decision were subversive of the principles of true republicanism; that they were also against the principles of the Bible. Since the committee had admitted the evil of slavery, he contended, the failure to find a remedy is unworthy of the representatives of the people of the State. He maintained that there is no soundness in the argument that because of the physical differences, the black man should be deprived of the "common rights of man," and that it is not better to have slavery distributed over a large area of country than to concentrate it, if slavery is an evil, since the spread of any evil cannot be better than its limitation.[37]

As an indirect blow at any possible suffrage right of any persons of color under the new constitution, Marr, delegate from Weakley and Obion, introduced a resolution at this time intended to restrict suffrage permanently and definitely to white males, specifically prohibiting all "mulattoes, negroes, and Indians." This was referred to the committee of the whole, but, oddly enough, failed of adoption.[38] The intermittent debate on the subject of emancipation, led on the one side by Stephenson, and on the other by McKinney, was resumed a few days later when the latter gave an additional report. He stated that the memorials with their signatures had been examined and the names attached to them had numbered 1804 in all. 105 purported to be slave-holders, said he, but by inquiry the committee had ascertained that the aggregate number of slaves in their possession was not greater than 500. He admitted that there were several counties from which memorials had come, but charged that there had been a signing of more than one memorial in some counties by the same persons, so that there was a doubling of names without a proportional increase of individual signers. He depreciated Stephenson's statement that these memorials had come from almost every part of the State as ill-founded; for the sixteen counties of Tennessee which had sent representatives with memorials favorable to the idea of emancipation were not from widely scattered portions of the State. Only five extended westward beyond the longitude of Chattanooga, and there were

none of the more western counties represented. The two sections of the State seemed to bear no hostility toward each other, but decidedly disagreed on the slavery question. The question was largely an economic one with the Tennesseans of the Mississippi Valley. Cotton was coming into greater and greater importance every year. It could, they thought, be most profitably raised by large groups of workmen whose labor was cheap. The slave was the logical person, and they fastened on him the burden.

Lest the impression has been made that the only portion of the State from which the sentiment of an anti-slavery nature came was East Tennessee, it will be well to refer to the vigorous speech of Kincaid, a delegate from Bedford County, who flung a parting reply to the friends and sympathizers of the Committee of Thirteen which had succeeded in thwarting any official action upon the matter proposed by the memorialists.[39] Bedford County, in the central portion of the State, represented both economically and socially a type of citizen different from that of the mountaineer stock. Yet Kincaid fearlessly defended the plain human rights of the colored population in his speech as much as Stephenson had done, and scathingly denounced the Committee of Thirteen for its attitude toward slavery.

The pro-slavery faction, however, successfully contended that the emancipation party had no definite plan for emancipation, as those in Washington County and other districts were divided in their ideas on this subject. There were about thirty memorials besides the one from this county, one half of them asking that all children born in the State after 1835 should be free and that all slaves should be freed in 1855 and sent out of the State. The other half of the memorials favored making the slaves free in 1866 and having them colonized. As a matter of fact, Tennessee did emancipate its slaves three years earlier than this date. By the Committee of Thirteen these statements were given to show that there could be no virtue in acting in accord with the wishes of the memorialists, as they were hopelessly divided in their recommendations. The report of the committee was tabled, but the debate was by no means ended. Further detail is not of use to us here save to point out that there was no vote in the matter and that Stephenson bitterly upbraided the convention as a whole, stating that it had not made an effort to answer the prayer of the memorialists. The survey of this prolonged and unprofitable struggle shows how divided were the people of Tennessee on the question of abolishing slavery.[40]

Later in the convention there occurred some incidents which throw light on the situation of the Negro. The Bill of Rights in the amended constitution, sec. 26, provided: "That free white men of this state have a right to keep and bear arms in their own defence." [41] A delegate from Sevier County objected to the word "white" and moved that it be stricken from the record. Another member from Green County moved that the word "citizens" be inserted instead of "free white men," but this was rejected by a vote of 19 to 30, Stephenson and others from East Tennessee voting with the ayes, and the Committee of Thirteen with others defeating the motion. A resolution was then

brought forward by a delegate from Dyer County intended to prohibit the general assembly from having power to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves without consent of owners.[42] Immediately a memorialist sympathizer moved to lay this on the table until January, 1835. His effort was lost, and the resolution passed. Thus was the day completely won for the anti-emancipation faction.

There had been considerable discussion as to the status of free men of color, and although one provision of the constitution seemed to give the right of suffrage to all free men, yet there was a restriction limiting the privilege of voting to those who were "competent witnesses in a court of justice against a white person." [43] One commentator upon his unusual provision observes that one cannot tell how many Negroes were entitled to vote under this provision.[44] But whatever present-day students may make of this, it was recognized by the members of this convention that the free Negro had no suffrage right, for near the close of the convention there was submitted a resolution providing that since "free men of color were denied suffrage by the constitution," the apportionment of senators and representatives from their respective districts should be based on the white population alone.[45] The revised constitution contains this provision, but with different wording.

The general tendency of the whole body of legal enactments in the period 1834-65 was toward restricting the slave more and more, and at the same time, eliminating the element known as free Negroes. Probably this had an effect upon the percentage of free Negroes in the total population as seen in the years 1820 and 1850. The national percentage for these years in question was in each case six tenths of one per cent.[46] But as the total Negro population increased despite the migration southward from Tennessee, the ratio for Tennessee in 1820 was 3 per cent, and for 1850, 2.4 per cent, a period of greater repression, showing decrease, although very slight.

A general law of 1839 forbade the slave to act as a free person, that is, to hire his own time from his master, or to have merchandisable property and trade therewith.[47] Runaways were to be punished by being made to labor on the streets or alleys of towns, as well as by imprisonment. Several laws show the tendency to class free Negroes with slaves by stating that all capital offences for slaves were also capital offences for free Negroes.[48] Another plainly provides that all offences made capital in the code of that time for slaves, should also be capital for "free persons of color." [49] Further, "no free person of color might keep a grocery or tippling house" under pain of a heavy fine. It will be seen that the attitude thus was plainly more and more adverse to the free Negro. An act of 1842 had made it possible to amend all laws relating to "free persons of color," and this was freely done.[50]

Free Negroes of "good character," either resident in the State prior to 1836 or having removed to the State before that year, and preferring, in their respective county courts, petitions to remain in the same, might do so, but otherwise must leave the State under severe

penalties of imprisonment and hard labor, as provided under the law of 1831, prior to the new constitution. The subjects of this legal provision were to renew this court proceeding every three years, under the same penalty for failing to perform the renewal.[51] The laws of registry of free Negroes were kept in force and made, if anything, more rigid. One provision of these enactments was that there should be in the registration papers specification of any "peculiar physical marks on the person" so registered.[52] This practice, defended by law, is exceedingly interesting to the student who compares it with what has long been common knowledge regarding the practices of slave-buyers in the markets. And here we have a measure of the complete humiliation of the "free person of color," for every free Negro or mulatto residing in any county of the State was compelled to undergo this examination before officers of the county court and be duly registered thereafter as a free person.[53]

As might be expected, the law of 1831 was followed up by enactments strictly requiring the emancipation of slaves, when allowed by the State, to be followed closely by the removal of the freedmen from the State. Also instructions for the transportation of certain Negroes to Africa were given in the same code. Those who had acquired freedom after 1836, or who should do so, together with slaves successfully suing for freedom, also free Negroes unable to give bond for good behavior although having right to reside in the State, were all to be transported to Africa, unless they went elsewhere out of the State, according to provision by law.[54]

The word "mulatto" is found often in the laws of this period, showing that this type was becoming an important factor in the race relations of white and black. As far as is known, there is no way of obtaining even the approximate proportion of white mothers to white fathers, but because of the overwhelming evidence by personal testimony of ex-slaves as to the relations of the masters and overseers of plantations to the slave women, and the corresponding power of the dominant race to prevent, at least in large degree, similar physical marriages between Negroes and the women of their race, we may be said rightly to infer that the proportion of white mothers of colored offspring to white fathers was then, as it has always been, very small. In Maryland, according to Brackett, the child of a white father and a mulatto slave could not give testimony in court against a white person, whereas the child of a white mother and a black man would be disqualified in this regard only during his term of service.[55] "A free mulatto was good evidence," says he, "against a white person." [56] The mulatto of Tennessee had no such social or legal position as either of these cases indicate, although here again personal testimony brings to light notable exceptions of the social behavior of individuals in certain localities, where this type, that is, the colored offspring of white motherhood, was regarded as a separate class, above the ordinary person of color.[57]

It is likely that in East Tennessee there was considerable prevalence of such amalgamation of African and Scotch-Irish race stocks, with white motherhood.[58] The reasons were largely economic. Many of the

whites who came to live in the lower farm lands down from their first holdings on the rocky slopes and unfertile soil, were driven from these more productive lowlands by the rich white land owners who preferred to have large plantations with great numbers of blacks to raise the crops, rather than to rent or sell to small farmers. For these poorer white neighbors there was no recourse but to take to the mountains and to cultivate there the less desirable lands. The life they had to live was necessarily very rough and hard; their principal diet was corn, and often the rocky soil only yielded them that grudgingly and scantily. They frequently came in contact with the slaves, and the latter were known to steal provisions from their masters' storehouses and bring to these hill-country people appetizing additions to their meager provisions. And the slaves were also known to mingle with them in the quilting, husking, barn-raising, and other rural festivities, being undoubtedly made welcome. It requires no immoderate imagination to state here the likelihood of much racial intermixture, as we know, from testimony, of more than a few specific cases, and we have, in this rather strange way, the account of social intermingling and the secret gifts of the black men who visited these mountain homes.

THREE AT GRACE

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The New Land*, by Elma Ehrlich Levinger
1920

—The Story of the First Jewish Settler in Alabama.—

Colonel Hawkins, the Indian agent for the government at Pole Cat Springs, Alabama, in 1804, leaned across the pine table to extend a cordial hand to his visitor. Abram Mordecai, who stood before him, although almost fifty, gave one the impression of a much younger man. Lean and lithe as a panther, with shaggy black hair and keen eyes, his distinctly Jewish features were so tanned and weather-beaten that he looked far more the Indian than the Jew. He nodded gayly to his employer before he flung himself into a chair, his gun-stock between his knees, his great brown hands clasped behind his head. As he sat there dressed in the buckskin shirt and trousers of his half-civilized Indian neighbors, every free movement of his large body suggesting his life in the wilderness, the Jewish adventurer presented a perfect picture of the pioneer of his day.

"I have come, Colonel Hawkins," he began in his usual abrupt manner, "to ask your help in building a cotton gin. Yes," as the other showed surprise, "I know the enterprise seems a strange one for a rover like me to suggest, and, perhaps, a foolish undertaking in the wilderness. Yet the wilderness must pass and we must build now for the days to come."

"Go on, Mordecai," encouraged his chief. "What are your plans?"

"I know how eager you are to civilize the Indians in our region and teach them the arts of peace," went on Mordecai. "Thus far we have done nothing but trade with them for peltries and healing barks and oils. But could we not have the squaws raise the cotton and bring it down the river in their canoes and prepare it in our gin for the market in New Orleans?"

"Good." Hawkins nodded approvingly. "First we must gain permission of the Hickory Ground Indians for the erection of our gin, for it will not be wise to risk their enmity at the outset. But there is not another gin in the state. Where shall we find a pattern; where shall we get the workmen to fashion one for us; or the needed tools?"

"I have thought of that," Abram Mordecai told him. "There are two Jews of Georgia, Lyon and Barrett, who have both the tools and the skill for the task. I met Lyon when we were both young men serving in the army under General Washington. You can rely upon him for faithful service."

A little smile curved the agent's lips. "You Jews!" he exclaimed. "Is there any enterprise in which you have not had a hand? Even back to the building of the pyramids in old Egypt! It is like a Jew to plan the first cotton gin in Alabama--and to bring two of his race to build it."

"We are indeed builders," answered Mordecai a little dryly, "but not always for ourselves." He rose. "Shall I send for them?"

"The sooner the better. And it will be good to meet your fellow Hebrews again, eh, Mordecai?"

Abram Mordecai, already at the door, turned a moment. His eyes, a striking hazel in the tan of his roughened face, grew wistful for a moment. "I am more Indian than Jew, more savage than white man," he answered gravely. "Perhaps it is a pity," and he was gone.

Mordecai, the child of the wilderness, where the struggle against savage and beast of prey sharpen the wits and teach the pioneer the need for rapid decisions, lost no time in executing his commission. As soon as word could reach Lyon, he informed his old comrade of the work he had in mind for him. The next post told Mordecai that the two men with their tools, gin saws and other materials loaded upon pack horses, were already on their way to Alabama. He waited eagerly for their arrival. The gin meant more to him than a source of revenue, were he successful in the cotton market. For, as Hawkins had observed, the Jew was not content to be a mere trader and hunter, like so many adventurers of the back woods. He longed to build, to create something lasting even in that ever-changing wilderness. And perhaps, mingled with his impatience, was a queer longing to see his own again, not merely white men like Colonel Hawkins, but Jews such as he had known before leaving his native Pennsylvania so many years ago. He smiled to find himself actually counting the days before he could expect Lyon

and Barrett to arrive.

They came at last one evening near sunset, two brown-skinned rovers in half-savage dress affected by the backwoodsmen of that day; Lyon, grave and silent, Barrett, with a boy's laugh, despite the sprinkling of gray in his curly hair. Mordecai stood at the door of his hut to greet them. A little behind him, humbly respectful like all the women of her nation to her lord and master, stood a squaw clad in a blanket with strings of beads woven in the long, dark braids of her hair. Her bright, black eyes sparkled with interest as she surveyed the strangers; but as they came nearer, she turned quickly and went back into the hut, where she continued to prepare the evening meal. But Mordecai advanced toward the travellers, his hand extended in welcome.

"_Shalom Aleichem_," he began, his tongue faltering a little over the old Hebrew greeting he had not used for so long. "I am glad you have come at last."

"_Aleichem Shalom_," answered Lyon. "It is long since we have met, Abram Mordecai." He took his old comrade's outstretched hand and indicated Barrett with a curt nod. "My friend," he said, briefly. "He will help us build the gin."

"You are both welcome," their host assured them. "Becky," he called, and the Indian woman appeared at the door, "unload the horses and bed them for the night with ours," and he indicated a roughly constructed barn a little way from the hut which it so resembled. "But first bring a pail of fresh water from the spring that these gentlemen may wash after their journey."

Becky, still devouring the newcomers with her eyes, curiously, like those of an inquisitive squirrel, caught up a wooden bucket that stood by the open door and started down the winding path that led to the spring. "My wife," explained Mordecai, pretending not to see the look of surprise with which his former friend Lyon greeted his statement. "Yes," half in apology, "I know it seems strange to you. But for so many years I felt myself a part of the Creek nation, that when I was ill with malarial fever and she nursed me back to health, I was glad to lessen my loneliness and make her my wife according to the customs of her people. Yet," and he smiled a little bitterly, "yet, strange as it may seem, I still remember that I am a Jew."

He led them into the little cabin with its one window and floor of clay. At one end stood a rude fireplace made of bricks where a huge kettle swung Indian-fashion above the logs. At the other end of the room several heavy blankets indicated a bed, the only furniture being a few rough chairs, a table and an old trunk half covered by a gayly striped blanket such as Indian women weave. "A rough place, even for the wilderness," confessed Mordecai, "but I dare attempt no better. Of late, the Indians once so friendly, have grown surly and suspicious; they rightly fear that the white man will wrench the wilderness from them. Especially Towerculla, a neighboring chief, who hates the ways of the whites and has been murmuring against me ever since he has

heard that a cotton gin will be erected through my agency. So who knows when I will be driven from this place by the red men--providing that they allow me to escape with my life."

"And have you no white neighbors?" asked Barrett, who had seated himself upon the trunk, where he sat loosening his dusty leggings.

"There is 'Old Milly'." Mordecai's hazel eyes twinkled a little. "She is the wife of an English soldier who deserted from the army during the Revolution. After her husband's death she took up her abode here. She is a woman of strong and resolute character and has considerable power over the Indians of this district, who stand greatly in awe of her. She lately married a red man and is really a great person in our little community, for she owns several slaves and many horses and cattle. Tomorrow I will introduce you to my only white neighbor. But here is Becky with the water," as the squaw entered with the brimming pail. "Wash the dust from your faces that we may sit and eat, for you must be nearly famished."

The travelers, having washed in the wooden basin that stood on one of the chairs and shaken some of the dust from their garments, now came eagerly enough to the table, which the silent Becky had prepared for them. Upon the bare boards she had set several mugs and heavy crockery bowls, pewter forks and a large, steaming vessel of the stew which she had taken from the fire, as well as several cakes made of corn flour and cooked in the ashes. Such fare was familiar enough to the pioneers, but the two guests could not help staring at the book that lay at each plate, a worn Sidur (prayer book), the ancient Hebrew characters looking strangely foreign in the primitive forests of America. Abram Mordecai saw the two men exchange glances and flushed a little beneath his tan.

"A foolish thought of mine," he murmured. "When I left my father's house in Pennsylvania I carried one of these in my pack, wrapped in the talith (praying shawl), he had brought with him from Germany. And later I found the two others in the bundle of a Jewish peddler murdered by the Indians. The Indian agent at St. Mary's sent me to ransom him and several other captives taken by the Creeks, but I came too late. Somehow, I could not bear to throw them away or destroy them. They have been with me in all my wanderings and more than once when I thought it about time for the fall holy days have I read the prayers and wished that I might have a few of my brethren with me to observe them aright. And tonight--" for a moment the confident, self-reliant adventurer seemed as embarrassed as a bashful child, "and tonight I hoped that since there would be three of us at grace, we might read the benedictions together--if you care to--and I would know how it feels to be a Jew again."

Barrett laughed, his hearty school boy laugh, as he flung himself unceremoniously into a chair beside the table. "It's many a day since I've said or heard a brocha (blessing)," he said, "but I'll go through it without any book, thank you."

Lyon said nothing, as he took the place Mordecai assigned him at the foot of the table, but there was a tender look about his grave mouth. Perhaps he realized how difficult it had been for Mordecai to confess his loneliness for the customs of his people; but, according to his wont, he said nothing.

Smiling almost childishly, Mordecai passed a bowl of water to each of his guests that they might wash their hands, which they did, murmuring the blessing as they did so. Then, taking his place at the head of the table, he poured water over his own hands, saying the Hebrew benediction as he wiped them upon a faded red napkin which lay beside his _Sidur_. Somehow, after his brief confession, he felt ashamed to tell his guests that the napkin had belonged to his mother and had rested beside the neglected _Sidur_ for so many years. Then, breaking a bit from the bread and handing it to each of the men, he repeated the blessing for which, although he had not recited it for so many years, he need no prompting from the worn black book beside his plate.

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth," he said in Hebrew.

Becky, as her husband called her, stood in the background as silent as a bronze statue until the little ceremony was over. If she was impressed by the strangeness of it all, she gave no sign. For so many of the customs of her husband's alien race were strange to her that she had long ago ceased to wonder or desire any explanation. Now at a sign from Mordecai, she took away the bowl of water, and, filling a plate with the savoury stew, took it to the corner of the hut, here, crouched upon the blankets, she ate her supper, quite content to watch the white strangers from a distance.

Mordecai served his guests, then himself, and over the stew and corn bread the men exchanged stories of their experiences in the wilderness. The host told a little of his own adventures since leaving the east, of his life as a trader with the Indians, of the peace treaty he had brought about with the Chickasaw nation, of his journeys south to New Orleans and Mobile, his furs and medicinal barks piled high in the barge with no companions but the painted savages to assist him. A life of highly-colored adventure with variety enough to satisfy any spirit, but even now Mordecai was growing restless and longed for another enterprise to occupy him after the cotton gin should be completed.

Then, the meal being over, Mordecai, with the same shamefaced bashfulness he had shown when speaking of the _Sidurim_, turned the pages of the book, saying almost wistfully: "I know that tonight is not a festival or Sabbath with us, gentlemen, but if you would care to go over the psalm with me-----"

"We've been waiting a long time for this and we'll give good measure," laughed little Barrett, but his eyes did not jest as Mordecai in the quaint old sing-song of the synagogue began "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion" and Lyon gravely followed.

"And now," Mordecai's face fairly glowed with pleasure, "now we will have the special grace, since there are three of us at the table."

"Let us say grace," he began, with hardly a look at the Hebrew.

"Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever," responded his guests.

"With the permission of those present," went on the host, "we will bless Him of whose bounty we have partaken."

"Blessed be He of whose bounty we have partaken," answered the others, "and through whose goodness we live."

As Mordecai repeated the Hebrew phrases, learned in his almost forgotten _Cheder_ (Hebrew School) days, a great longing came upon him and the tears coursed down his cheeks. To return again to this home, to keep the customs of his people and to die at last with Jewish friends about him and the Hebrew's declaration of faith upon his lips! But, as he closed the book, his eyes glanced about the little room and they grew dark with pain. The gun standing in the corner, the furs drying upon the wall, Becky crouching upon the blankets--all spoke to him of a life he had lived too long to exchange for the quiet existence of which he sometimes dreamed. He rose, and, with an abrupt gesture, pointed to a shaggy robe before the fire place.

"I have no better bed to offer you," he said, "but I know you are not used to a soft couch. You must be tired from your journey. Becky will tend to your horses so you had better sleep now, that tomorrow we may start out early and visit Colonel Hawkins. He would see you before you begin work on the cotton gin."

The cotton gin, the first to be built in Alabama, was completed in due time, and Barrett and Lyons, their pack horses again loaded with their tools, were ready to return to Georgia. If Mordecai felt any pain at having his co-religionists depart, he was skilful in concealing it. For, after his confidence over the supper table, he had slipped back into his stoical reserve and not even the taciturn Lyon was more silent or chary of speech in anything that did not directly concern the business in hand. So it was merry little Barrett who alone mentioned the occasion that for a moment had brought the strangers of the wilderness together and had made them brothers.

"We'll be coming back again when we want a taste of Becky's good stew--and a blessing afterwards," he jested as he swung himself into his saddle and reached down to shake hands with Mordecai.

"Or to build another gin if the Indians do not molest this one and drive me off," answered Mordecai lightly, but the jest lingered in his mind. His life among the superstitious savages, his solitary hours in the wilderness, had helped to tinge his shrewd, practical mind with a strong mysticism. He tried to dismiss the matter; but, as he walked

back to his hut that evening, Barrett's light words haunted him and gave him no rest. "Perhaps," he muttered, "perhaps, before my life is over, we will meet again and there will be three of us at grace."

But his fancies fled and his dreamy face grew hard and alert as he came to the clearing before his hut. There, in the midst of his Indian followers, all armed with long poles, stood Chief Towerculla, threatening Becky. The squaw had placed herself in the door of the hut, where she stood with folded arms, listening to the Chief's angry threats. If she felt any fear, there was no trace of it in her expressionless face. Nor did she seem relieved when Mordecai pushed between her and the angry Indian and demanded what business had brought him there. She merely shrugged a little, hitched up her buckskin skirt and resumed her task of pounding corn between two stones at the door of the hut, appearing to take no interest in the quarrel that followed. For like a good squaw, she did not think it seemly to interfere in her husband's business affairs.

"And now, Towerculla," began Mordecai in the Indian tongue which he spoke fluently. "Why do you come here and seek to frighten my squaw in my absence? And why have you brought your men with you?"

The Chief grunted in disgust. "And why do you bring the pale face here to build?" he answered Mordecai question for question. "Our squaws are well satisfied to work in the fields, to make oil from the hickory nuts, to weave blankets. But you would have them sell you cotton to make you rich; you would build a store and other white men would be greedy to trade with our women and build other gins and other stores--and soon there would be many of your people while we--" he waved his hand toward his warriors, "we children of the red men would be driven further into the wilderness. You have already driven us too far, you white men. I am willing to spare you for the sake of 'Old Milly,' whom we do not fear, for she is one of us. And she has pleaded for you more than once. So I will allow you and your squaw to depart in peace. By tomorrow morning leave for some other place--for it is not good to dwell here any longer."

For a moment Mordecai was too astonished to answer. Then he laughed boldly into the Indian's angry face. Towerculla sprang for him, but Mordecai swiftly stepped aside, and crouching, sprung upon the Chief and struck him to the ground. For a minute the two struggled together. Then the Indians fell upon Mordecai and released Towerculla, who rose from the dust, his face terrible in his anger. Mordecai struggled in vain against the blows of Towerculla's followers. As he sank to the ground overpowered, he caught himself murmuring, "They cannot kill me, until we three say grace together again," even while he longed for death to cut short the agony which was beginning to wrack every limb of his cruelly beaten body. Then out of the mist of red which seemed to swim before his eyes, a merciful black cloud descended and he knew nothing more until he regained consciousness and found himself in "Old Milly's" cabin, with Becky, still calm of face and quiet of voice bathing his wounds with cool water from the spring.

"What has happened?" he asked, trying to rise, but falling back moaning in his pain.

"Old Milly," a tall, sharp-faced woman, who sat weaving a basket as skillfully as any squaw, answered him. "Towerculla would have slain you, had not Becky brought me in time. He is not a good enemy to have, Abram Mordecai. When you are stronger, you must take his advice and go away. The Indians did not burn the barn, so your horses are safe, but the house was in flames before I could reach it and persuade Towerculla to leave you in peace."

Becky rose and walked to the table. Returning to where her husband lay, she placed in his hand three books with worn black covers and a faded red napkin. "I ran and got these when I saw they were destroying our cabin," she told him. "I knew you had kept them long; that they were dear to you as the gods of our people are to us--like a charm, maybe, to keep death away. And perhaps, when the white men come again, you will want to have them on the table and sing."

For the moment, Mordecai forgot that Becky was only a squaw, undeserving, according to the custom of her people, either thanks or praise. "You are a very good wife," he said, gently, "and I will buy you real gold earrings with the first money I earn from the cotton gin." And since he was so weak, neither woman dared to tell him for several days that the vengeance of the Indians had extended to the gin house, which now lay a heap of black ruins near the river.

Broken in body and ruined in fortune, Mordecai accompanied by the faithful Becky, bade farewell to Colonel Hawkins and journeyed further into the wilderness. For the Indian agent prudently refused to erect a second gin while the Indians still planned to injure Mordecai, and the adventurer himself felt that it would be hopeless to seek to gain the friendship of the embittered Chief. Trader and trapper, he led his solitary existence in the south, with no companionship but Becky's, until her death left him entirely alone.

He had regained his former vigor by this time and sometimes dreamed of returning to his boyhood home. But from the pioneer towns springing up wherever he passed, he knew that a new civilization was rising in America; that he was of the generation that must pass away as surely as the Indian and he realized that he would feel sadly out of place in the surroundings that he had known as a boy. Yet, dreamer that he was, he never ceased to picture himself, a sober stay-at-home citizen, living out the last years of his life in communion with his fellow Jews, who had never left their quiet firesides. Nor in all his wanderings did he ever part with the three _Sidurim_ and the faded red napkin. For as he grew older, the fantastic notion grew ever stronger that before he died he would again say grace with the builders of his cotton gin.

Almost a century old, he wandered back at last to Montgomery county, seeking the very spot where his hut had stood before Chief Towerculla had driven him away. Now the settlement of Dudleyville, so close at

hand, made him feel cramped and uncomfortable. Colonel Hawkins had long since left Pole Cat Springs; Chief Towerculla, driven away by the white men he had always feared, was dead; "Old Milly" no longer lived in her savage kingdom with her husband and her slaves.

But he felt too tired to travel further; perhaps he realized that no matter where he went he would feel lonely as the survivor of another day and generation. So he built a tiny cabin for himself, even putting together some crude furniture. Here he lived, never seeing a human face unless he walked to the village to secure supplies, which the settlers, vaguely touched by his loneliness, never failed to press upon him. He talked to them sometimes of the days before the wilderness had been conquered, speaking too, of the first cotton gin, which the Indians had destroyed. "I love the spot," he used to say, "but it is growing too crowded; yes," with a shake of his white head, "too crowded for one who needs plenty of fresh air to breathe. Next spring I must journey on." But when spring came, he would wait until fall, and again through the long winter. For his old ambition had left him and though his heart still wandered afar through the forests, his feet were too weary to follow it.

But one evening he felt strangely strong and refreshed. He had worked hard all the afternoon cleaning his little hut and now the humble room looked as spotless as spring water and vigorous scrubbing could make it. Even the table and chairs were scoured and the fireplace cleaned, while, to complete the day's task Mordecai had emptied an old barrel in the corner, burning the heap of odds and ends which had accumulated since his return. But now as he stood behind the table he held in his hand three black books and a faded napkin which he could not bring himself to destroy. As he stood there with the rays of the setting sun falling through the open door on his shaggy white head, old memories burned in his faded eyes and a strange, dreamy smile played about his mouth.

"I have found the books--it is time for them to come and say 'grace'," he murmured to himself. "I have put my house in order. I know it is time for me to go away--into the Great Wilderness--but not until we have three at grace once more."

Carefully placing a book at each place, he drew up two chairs and a box, spread the napkin at the head of the table and set out his few poor dishes and humble evening meal. Then he took his place, opened his book and waited. The Hebrew letters seemed strangely blurred; for the first time in his life his keen eyes failed him. But, glancing up, he thought he saw his two guests, Lyon and Barrett in their places waiting for him to begin the blessing before the meal.

"I am ready," he said, and even as he spoke, his head dropped upon the open book and Mordecai's restless spirit was at rest forever.

Recipes from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Stag Cook Book*, by Carroll Mac Sheridan

TERRAPIN

Jerome D. Kern

My favorite dish is Stewed Terrapin and my recipe follows:

Cut the boiled calves' liver into moderate sized pieces and put into stew pan with sufficient fresh butter to stew it well.

In another pan make a sauce of pre-Prohibition Sherry or Madeira, flavored with the beaten yolk of one egg, powdered nutmeg and mace, a pinch of Cayenne pepper, salt to taste, enlivened with large lump of butter.

If pre-Prohibition Sherry is not available, names and addresses of seventy-one bootleggers can be supplied.

Stir sauce well, and just before it comes to a boil, take it off the fire.

Use three or four hard-boiled hens' eggs to pinch hit for turtle's eggs and send to the table piping hot in chafing dish.

IMPORTANT: Serve the sauce separately. The terrapin is frequently ignored by those who prefer the flavor of the sherry. I am one of them.

TURKEY Á LA BURBANK

Luther Burbank_

“_The best ever._”[A]

For an ordinary ten-pound turkey _steam_ 2½ hours or until the muscles of the leg can be readily pierced with a dining fork. Take steamer from the fire and carefully remove the turkey to the roasting pan.

Meantime, prepare the dressing as follows: One loaf of bread, ordinary baker's size, or same amount of other bread, slice and toast slowly but thoroughly to a light golden color; while hot, spread butter on each slice just as a hungry boy would like it. Place in a deep dish. The cooked giblets, which, with the juice of one lemon and three whole large onions, should be ground all together in a meat grinder with

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon powdered sage

2 teaspoon summer savory

2 tablespoons sugar

These should be well sifted and then added to the ground vegetables and giblets, and with the meat juice saved from steaming, thoroughly mixed with the bread and all cut and mashed to about the consistency of thick mush. After filling, the turkey should be placed in an oven not too hot, and slowly roasted an hour or more.

Prepared as above, little or no basting will be necessary, but a few thin slices of bacon laid over the fowl will add flavor. Add no oysters, eggs, chestnuts or other abominations.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] Mr. Burbank says so himself. If he said he could make turkey look and taste like brook trout, he probably could.

SALADE Á LA TURC _Arthur T. Vance_

I don't profess to shine much as a cook. I would rather have somebody do it for me, but there are one or two things that I sometimes like to fix on my own hook.

Years ago there was some sort of a Centennial Exposition out in Nashville, Tenn. I don't remember what they had to celebrate, but at any rate I had to take it in. I didn't know a soul and good old Al Williams, the snake man—who died last year—gave me a letter of introduction to the Turk who ran the Hoochy-Koochy show on the midway. It is the only time I ever used a letter of introduction with efficiency and delectation. This Turk—who, incidentally, was one of the finest looking chaps I ever saw, and a man of education—welcomed me with open arms. First of all I had to see the show, and I was so enthusiastic about the gyrations of the sumptuous beauties that he did me the great honor of asking me to dine with him, en famille. It was a great experience. All the Hoochy-koochy dancers were there, in their stage costumes, with ma and pa and mother-in-law, and mother's great uncle and a rabble of other folks, large and small. We had a lot of funny things to eat, but there was one dish that really appealed to me. They called it "Salada" and I ate of it in such copious portions that my friend, the Turk, insisted on showing me how it was made. I have made it many times since for my own pleasure, at least—and most folk who try it once will try it again.

It is a salad of ripe tomatoes, cucumbers and onions. The main point is that you must not slice them up but—after you peel your onions, cucumbers and tomatoes—put them whole into a chopping bowl, and chop them into chunks with a chopping knife. The chunks should be about as large as the end of your thumb. After the chopping operation, put the whole business on the ice until it gets good and cold. Then drain off the juice.

Add a sharp French dressing, get a big spoon and a plate and go to it.

If it doesn't taste good, I'll eat it myself.

Recipes from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Vegetarian Cook Book*, by E. G. Fulton

AMERICAN OR FRENCH TOAST

Eggs, thoroughly beaten, 3.
Salt.
Butter.
Milk, 3 cups.
Sliced bread.

Beat the eggs thoroughly and add the milk and a little salt. Slice light bread and dip into the mixture, allowing each slice to absorb some of the milk. Then brown on a hot, buttered griddle or thick bottomed frying-pan. Spread with butter, and serve hot.

BOSTON CREAM TOAST

Toast two slices of bread, trim and cut in two lengthwise, making four pieces. Place these evenly on top of one another and cut again cornerwise, into long triangular pieces. Arrange artistically on a platter, and serve with cream sauce.

NUN'S TOAST

Hard-boiled eggs, 6.
Flour, 1 teaspoonful.
Butter.
Hot buttered toast.
Finely-chopped onion, 1.
Milk, 2 cups.

Put the butter into a saucepan, and when it begins to bubble add the chopped onion. Let the onion cook a little without color, then stir in the flour. Add the milk and stir till it becomes smooth. Then put in the eggs which have been sliced and let them get hot. Pour this mixture over neatly trimmed slices of hot, buttered toast. Season with salt.

BERRY TOAST

Any canned fruit, as strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, etc., may be used for toasts. Strain off the juice, boil, and thicken with corn starch to the consistency of cream. Stir in the strawberries and reheat till the berries are well heated through. Serve as other fruit toasts.

BANANA TOAST NO. 1

Peel and rub some nice bananas through a fine colander; sweeten and beat up with a little cream, and serve on moistened toast. Serve cold.

BANANA TOAST NO. 2

Take the desired quantity of bright fruit juice, as strawberry or cherry. Boil and thicken with corn starch. Into this slice some ripe bananas. The juice should not be too thick, but just so that the banana will appear suspended in the juice. Serve on moistened toast.

DATE TOAST WITH WALNUTS

Prepare same as date toast, then serve with walnut meat on each corner and one in the center.

TOMATO TOAST

Dress moistened toast with tomato sauce, as given under sauces; or use strained tomatoes thickened with flour or corn starch.

ASPARAGUS TOAST

Prepare as for stewed asparagus. Moisten and butter a piece of toast, lay four or five pieces of asparagus on it, pour a spoonful of white sauce on the bottom end of the stalks, and serve.

APPLE TOAST

Fresh stewed apples, rubbed through a colander and sweetened, make a nice dressing. The apples may be flavored with lemon, or mixed with grape or cranberry sauce. When the apples are put in the colander, the liquid may be poured into a saucepan and boiled into a syrup, and the toast moistened with this. Serve a spoonful or two of the apple sauce over all.

APRICOT TOAST

In making apricot marmalade, save the juice by itself and boil it down into a syrup. Moisten the toast, pour over some of the syrup, and some of the marmalade over all.

STUFFED TOMATOES.

Choose large, smooth tomatoes; cut a piece from the top of each; take out the inside, taking care not to cut the skin. Chop up the tomato-pulp with a little cold beef; add one-fourth as much bread-crumbs as you have pulp, and wet all with beef-gravy, seasoning with a little sugar, pepper, and salt. Fill the tomatoes with this force-meat; put on the top slices; pack the stuffing that remains between the tomatoes, and pour gravy upon this; cover and bake from forty to forty-five minutes.

STEWED TOMATOES.

Open a can of tomatoes an hour before cooking them. Leave out the cores and unripe parts. Cook always in tin or porcelain saucepans. Iron injures color and flavor. Stew gently for half an hour; season to taste with salt, pepper, a little sugar, and a tablespoonful of butter. Cook gently, uncovered, ten minutes longer, and turn into a deep dish.

BAKED TOMATOES.

1 can of tomatoes.
Stale bread, crumbed fine.
1 tablespoonful of butter.
Pepper, salt, a little chopped parsley, and white sugar.

Drain off two-thirds of the liquor from the tomatoes; salt it and set aside for another day's soup. One has no excuse for waste whose "stock-pot" is always near at hand. Little comes amiss to it. Cover the bottom of a bake-dish with crumbs; lay the tomatoes evenly upon this bed; season with pepper, salt, sugar, and parsley, with bits of butter here and there. Strew bread-crumbs over all, a thicker layer than at the bottom; put tiny pieces of butter upon this, and bake, covered, about thirty-five minutes. Take off the cover and brown upon the upper shelf of the oven. Do not let it stay there long enough to get dry.

CORN AND TOMATOES STEWED.

To a can of tomatoes add the half can of corn left from your soup. Stew together half an hour, with a little minced onion; then pepper and salt to taste, and stir in a great spoonful of butter with a very little sugar. Simmer ten minutes before turning out.

FRENCH TAPIOCA CUSTARD.

5 dessertspoonfuls of tapioca.
1 quart of milk.
1 pint of cold water.
3 eggs.

1 teaspoonful of vanilla.
1 heaping cup of sugar.
A pinch of salt.

Soak the tapioca in the water five hours. Heat the milk to scalding; add the tapioca, the water in which it was soaked, and the salt. Stir to boiling, and pour gradually upon the yolks and sugar, which should have been beaten together. Boil again, stirring constantly, about five minutes, or until it begins to thicken well. Turn into a bowl and stir gently into the custard the frothed whites and the flavoring. Eat cold.

ENGLISH TAPIOCA PUDDING.

1 cup of tapioca.
5 eggs.
3 pints of milk.
1 cup of sugar.
2 tablespoonfuls of butter.
½ lb. of raisins.
Half the grated peel of a lemon.
A _little_ salt.

Soak the tapioca for one hour in a pint of the milk; pour into a farina-kettle, surround with warm water, salt very slightly, and bring to a boil. When soft throughout, turn out to cool, while you make the custard. Heat a quart of milk to scalding; pour over the beaten eggs and sugar, this last having been rubbed to a cream with the butter. Mix with the tapioca—lemon-peel and raisins last. Dredge the fruit lightly with flour, and beat all up hard. Bake in a buttered dish one hour—at first covered.

Eat warm, with powdered sugar. It is better for not being too hot.

MASHED TURNIPS.

Boil soft, drain and mash, pressing the water out well, return to the saucepan, with a generous lump of butter; pepper and salt; stir constantly until the butter is dissolved, and all smoking hot, and serve in a covered dish.

VEAL AND TAPIOCA BROTH.

3 lbs. scrag of veal, well broken, and the meat cut small.
1 onion.
1 turnip.
½ cup of pearl tapioca.
2 blades of mace.
2 teaspoonfuls essence of celery.
Pepper and salt.
3 quarts of cold water.

Put meat, bones, and sliced vegetables on in the water, and cook slowly three hours. Soak the tapioca during this time in a very little milk.

Strain the soup, rubbing the vegetables through the colander; cool to throw up the fat. Skim and season. When hot again put in the tapioca and stir until it melts. Simmer half an hour, add the celery essence and serve.

CARE OF TABLE-LINEN.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Guide to *Hotel Housekeeping*, by Mary E. Palmer
1908

A table-cloth should be long enough to hang over the table, at least eighteen inches on all sides. Pattern cloths are prettier than the piece-linen. They are more expensive, but it pays to buy the best for hotel use. Linen, to have sufficient body to wear well, should have a certain weight to the square inch. Table-linen should weigh at least four and one-half ounces to the square yard. All pattern-cloths have the napkins to match. The napkins and table-cloths should have a tiny, narrow hem. They are best hemmed by hand, but this can not be thought of for hotels.

It takes the same amount of money to purchase the unbleached linen as it does to buy the bleached. The Irish bleached linen is of a more snowy whiteness than that of Germany. This is owing to the climate of Ireland, which is particularly adapted by sunshine and rain for natural bleaching.

Table-Linen Most Important.

The table-linen is more important than the bed-linen, and should receive the first consideration in the laundry.

It should be carefully counted and sorted by the linen-woman at night, after dinner, and should be ready for the laundryman who must rise very early in the morning in order to have the table-linen ready for the laundry-maids that come on duty at seven o'clock.

A table-cloth should be folded lengthwise twice, then doubled, putting both ends together, then folded, and it will be ready for the shelf. Napkins should be put through the mangle three times and left without folding, so the linen-woman can easily sort them.

Removing Stains.

Fruit-stains in linen may be removed by pouring boiling water through the stained spot. Lemon juice and salt will remove iron-rust.

Tea, coffee, chocolate, and fruit-stains should be removed as soon as possible by pouring boiling water over them. After fruit-stains have

been washed a few times in soapsuds, they become as firmly fixed in the linen as though they were dyed there, and can only be removed by a bleaching process. A good bleach can be made by taking one pint of boiling water to one teaspoonful of oxalic acid and one teaspoonful of ammonia. One teacupful of ammonia to a wash will keep the table-linen white.

The care of the table-linen is a very important feature of the housekeeper's work. In many hotels, the housekeeper is required to purchase the linen. Fashion changes in table-linen as in other things. A careful study of facts and figures has proved that, in proportion to the population, the United States of America consumes more linen than any other country in the world. It is not, however, a leader in the production of flax. Russia takes the lead in this industry. The United States grows flax for the seed and not for the fibre; hence very little weaving is done in this country.

Kinds of Linen.

Linen has a variety of names, as Holland, damask, et cetera. Damask linen was first made in Damascus--the oldest city in the world--and was figured in fruit and flowers. A long time ago linen made in Scotland was sent to Germany to be bleached; hence the name Holland.

The old-time way of bleaching was long and expensive, sometimes taking an entire summer. After it was bleached by a natural process of open air, dew, and sunshine, it was then treated with an alkaline, and then buttermilk. It was left lying on the grass for a month, and sprinkled frequently with water and sometimes sour milk.

At the present time, linen can be bleached in two weeks. The cost of bleaching is much less and linen fabric is one-half cheaper than formerly. The chemicals used in the modern process of bleaching greatly injures the fibre, and linen is not so durable as it was under the old-fashioned way of bleaching.

How to Test Linen.

The housekeeper in selecting linen at the counter may test the linen by ravelling out some of the threads. The threads that form the woof as well as the warp should be strong, and long thread linen. Never buy linen that is stiff and glossy, as it will be thin after it is laundered. Linen should be substantial, but pliant when crushed in the hand. Never buy a table-cloth that is part linen and part cotton, as the shrinkage of linen and cotton fibre varies greatly, which causes the threads to break, and the table-cloth will soon be full of holes.

Off the Turnpike

Project Gutenberg's Etext of *Men, Women and Ghosts* by Amy Lowell

Good ev'nin', Mis' Priest.
I jest stepped in to tell you Good-bye.
Yes, it's all over.
All my things is packed
An' every last one o' them boxes
Is on Bradley's team
Bein' hauled over to th' depot.
No, I ain't goin' back agin.
I'm stoppin' over to French's fer to-night,
And goin' down first train in th' mornin'.
Yes, it do seem kinder queer
Not to be goin' to see Cherry's Orchard no more,
But Land Sakes! When a change's comin',
Why, I al'ays say it can't come too quick.
Now, that's real kind o' you,
Your doughnuts is always so tasty.
Yes, I'm goin' to Chicago,
To my niece,
She's married to a fine man, hardware business,
An' doin' real well, she tells me.
Lizzie's be'n at me to go out ther for the longest while.
She ain't got no kith nor kin to Chicago, you know
She's rented me a real nice little flat,
Same house as hers,
An' I'm goin' to try that city livin' folks say's so pleasant.
Oh, yes, he was real generous,
Paid me a sight o' money fer the Orchard;
I told him 'twouldn't yield nothin' but stones,
But he ain't farmin' it.
Lor', no, Mis' Priest,
He's jest took it to set and look at the view.
Mebbe he wouldn't be so stuck on the view
Ef he'd seed it every mornin' and night for forty year
Same's as I have.
I dessay it's pretty enough,
But it's so pressed into me
I c'n see't with my eyes shut.
No. I ain't cold, Mis' Priest,
Don't shut th' door.
I'll be all right in a minit.
But I ain't a mite sorry to leave that view.
Well, mebbe 'tis queer to feel so,
An' mebbe 'taint.
My! But that tea's revivin'.
Old things ain't always pleasant things, Mis' Priest.
No, no, I don't cal'late on comin' back,
That's why I'd ruther be to Chicago,
Boston's too near.

It ain't cold, Mis' Priest,
It's jest my thoughts.
I ain't sick, only --
Mis' Priest, ef you've nothin' ter take yer time,
An' have a mind to listen,
Ther's somethin' I'd like ter speak about
I ain't never mentioned it,
But I'd like to tell yer 'fore I go.
Would you mind lowerin' them shades,
Fall twilight's awful grey,
An' that fire's real cosy with the shades drawn.
Well, I guess folks about here think I've be'n dret'ful onsociable.
You needn't say 'taint so, 'cause I know diff'rent.
An' what's more, it's true.
Well, the reason is I've be'n scared out o' my life.
Scared ev'ry minit o' th' time, fer eight year.
Eight mortal year 'tis, come next June.
'Twas on the eighteenth o' June,
Six months after I'd buried my husband,
That somethin' happened ter me.
Mebbe you'll mind that afore that
I was a cheery body.
Hiram was too,
Al'ays liked to ask a neighbor in,
An' ev'n when he died,
Barrin' low sperrits, I warn't averse to seein' nobody.
But that eighteenth o' June changed ev'rythin'.
I was doin' most o' th' farmwork myself,
With jest a hired boy, Clarence King, 'twas,
Comin' in fer an hour or two.
Well, that eighteenth o' June
I was goin' round,
Lockin' up and seein' to things 'fore I went to bed.
I was jest steppin' out t' th' barn,
Goin' round outside 'stead o' through the shed,
'Cause there was such a sight o' moonlight
Somehow or another I thought 'twould be pretty outdoors.
I got settled for pretty things that night, I guess.
I ain't stuck on 'em no more.
Well, them laylock bushes side o' th' house
Was real lovely.
Glitt'rin' and shakin' in the moonlight,
An' the smell o' them rose right up
An' most took my breath away.
The colour o' the spikes was all faded out,
They never keep their colour when the moon's on 'em,
But the smell fair 'toxicated me.
I was al'ays partial to a sweet scent,
An' I went close up t' th' bushes
So's to put my face right into a flower.
Mis' Priest, jest's I got breathin' in that laylock bloom
I saw, layin' right at my feet,
A man's hand!

It was as white's the side o' th' house,
And sparklin' like that lum'nous paint they put on gate-posts.
I screamed right out,
I couldn't help it,
An' I could hear my scream
Goin' over an' over
In that echo be'ind th' barn.
Hearin' it agin an' agin like that
Scared me so, I dar'sn't scream any more.
I jest stood ther,
And looked at that hand.
I thought the echo'd begin to hammer like my heart,
But it didn't.
There was only th' wind,
Sighin' through the laylock leaves,
An' slappin' 'em up agin the house.
Well, I guess I looked at that hand
Most ten minits,
An' it never moved,
Jest lay there white as white.
After a while I got to thinkin' that o' course
'Twas some drunken tramp over from Redfield.
That calmed me some,
An' I commenced to think I'd better git him out
From under them laylocks.
I planned to drag him in t' th' barn
An' lock him in ther till Clarence come in th' mornin'.
I got so mad thinkin' o' that all-fired brazen tramp
Asleep in my laylocks,
I jest stooped down and grabbed th' hand and give it an awful pull.
Then I bumped right down settin' on the ground.
Mis' Priest, ther warn't no body come with the hand.
No, it ain't cold, it's jest that I can't abear thinkin' of it,
Ev'n now.
I'll take a sip o' tea.
Thank you, Mis' Priest, that's better.
I'd ruther finish now I've begun.
Thank you, jest the same.
I dropped the hand's ef it'd be'n red hot
'Stead o' ice cold.
Fer a minit or two I jest laid on that grass
Pantin'.
Then I up and run to them laylocks
An' pulled 'em every which way.
True es I'm settin' here, Mis' Priest,
Ther warn't nothin' ther.
I peeked an' pryed all about 'em,
But ther warn't no man ther
Neither livin' nor dead.
But the hand was ther all right,
Upside down, the way I'd dropped it,
And glist'nin' fit to dazzle yer.
I don't know how I done it,

An' I don't know why I done it,
But I wanted to git that dret'ful hand out o' sight
I got in t' th' barn, somehow,
An' felt roun' till I got a spade.
I couldn't stop fer a lantern,
Besides, the moonlight was bright enough in all conscience.
Then I scooped that awful thing up in th' spade.
I had a sight o' trouble doin' it.
It slid off, and tipped over, and I couldn't bear
Ev'n to touch it with my foot to prop it,
But I done it somehow.
Then I carried it off be'ind the barn,
Clost to an old apple-tree
Where you couldn't see from the house,
An' I buried it,
Good an' deep.

I don't rec'lect nothin' more o' that night.
Clarence woke me up in th' mornin',
Hollerin' fer me to come down and set th' milk.
When he'd gone,
I stole roun' to the apple-tree
And seed the earth all new turned
Where I left it in my hurry.
I did a heap o' gardenin'
That mornin'.
I couldn't cut no big sods
Fear Clarence would notice and ask me what I wanted 'em fer,
So I got teeny bits o' turf here and ther,
And no one couldn't tell ther'd be'n any diggin'
When I got through.
They was awful days after that, Mis' Priest,
I used ter go every mornin' and poke about them bushes,
An' up and down the fence,
Ter find the body that hand come off of.
But I couldn't never find nothin'.
I'd lay awake nights
Hearin' them laylocks blowin' and whiskin'.
At last I had Clarence cut 'em down
An' make a big bonfire of 'em.
I told him the smell made me sick,
An' that warn't no lie,
I can't abear the smell on 'em now;
An' no wonder, es you say.
I fretted somethin' awful 'bout that hand
I wondered, could it be Hiram's,
But folks don't rob graveyards hereabouts.
Besides, Hiram's hands warn't that awful, starin' white.
I give up seein' people,
I was afeared I'd say somethin'.
You know what folks thought o' me
Better'n I do, I dessay,
But mebbe now you'll see I couldn't do nothin' diff'rent.

But I stuck it out,
I warn't goin' to be downed
By no loose hand, no matter how it come ther
But that ain't the worst, Mis' Priest,
Not by a long ways.
Two year ago, Mr. Densmore made me an offer for Cherry's Orchard.
Well, I'd got used to th' thought o' bein' sort o' blighted,
An' I warn't scared no more.
Lived down my fear, I guess.
I'd kinder got used to th' thought o' that awful night,
And I didn't mope much about it.
Only I never went out o' doors by moonlight;
That stuck.
Well, when Mr. Densmore's offer come,
I started thinkin' 'bout the place
An' all the things that had gone on ther.
Thinks I, I guess I'll go and see where I put the hand.
I was foolhardy with the long time that had gone by.
I know'd the place real well,
Fer I'd put it right in between two o' the apple roots.
I don't know what possessed me, Mis' Priest,
But I kinder wanted to know
That the hand had been flesh and bone, anyway.
It had sorter bothered me, thinkin' I might ha' imagined it.
I took a mornin' when the sun was real pleasant and warm;
I guessed I wouldn't jump for a few old bones.
But I did jump, somethin' wicked.
Ther warn't no bones!
Ther warn't nothin'!
Not ev'n the gold ring I'd minded bein' on the little finger.
I don't know ef ther ever was anythin'.
I've worried myself sick over it.
I be'n diggin' and diggin' day in and day out
Till Clarence ketched me at it.
Oh, I know'd real well what you all thought,
An' I ain't sayin' you're not right,
But I ain't goin' to end in no county 'sylum
If I c'n help it.
The shiv'rin' fits come on me sudden like.
I know 'em, don't you trouble.
I've fretted considerable about the 'sylum,
I guess I be'n frettin' all the time I ain't be'n diggin'.
But anyhow I can't dig to Chicago, can I?
Thank you, Mis' Priest,
I'm better now. I only dropped in in passin'.
I'll jest be steppin' along down to French's.
No, I won't be seein' nobody in the mornin',
It's a pretty early start.
Don't you stand ther, Mis' Priest,
The wind'll blow yer lamp out,
An' I c'n see easy, I got aholt o' the gate now.
I ain't a mite tired, thank you.
Good-night.

The Tarbolton Lasses

Project Gutenberg's *Poems And Songs Of Robert Burns*

If ye gae up to yon hill-tap,
Ye'll there see bonie Peggy;
She kens her father is a laird,
And she forsooth's a leddy.

There Sophy tight, a lassie bright,
Besides a handsome fortune:
Wha canna win her in a night,
Has little art in courtin'.

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,
And tak a look o' Mysie;
She's dour and din, a deil within,
But aiblins she may please ye.

If she be shy, her sister try,
Ye'll maybe fancy Jenny;
If ye'll dispense wi' want o' sense--
She kens hersel she's bonie.

As ye gae up by yon hillside,
Speir in for bonie Bessy;
She'll gie ye a beck, and bid ye light,
And handsomely address ye.

There's few sae bonie, nane sae guid,
In a' King George' dominion;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this--
It's Bessy's ain opinion!

Ah, Woe Is Me, My Mother Dear

Paraphrase of Jeremiah, 15th Chap., 10th verse.

Ah, woe is me, my mother dear!
A man of strife ye've born me:
For sair contention I maun bear;
They hate, revile, and scorn me.

I ne'er could lend on bill or band,
That five per cent. might blest me;
And borrowing, on the tither hand,
The deil a ane wad trust me.

Yet I, a coin-denied wight,
By Fortune quite discarded;
Ye see how I am, day and night,
By lad and lass blackguarded!

THE CLIFF TEMPLE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Sea Garden*, by Hilda Doolittle

I

Great, bright portal,
shelf of rock,
rocks fitted in long ledges,
rocks fitted to dark, to silver granite,
to lighter rock--
clean cut, white against white.

High--high--and no hill-goat
tramples--no mountain-sheep
has set foot on your fine grass;
you lift, you are the world-edge,
pillar for the sky-arch.

The world heaved--
we are next to the sky:
over us, sea-hawks shout,
gulls sweep past--
the terrible breakers are silent
from this place.

Below us, on the rock-edge,
where earth is caught in the fissures
of the jagged cliff,
a small tree stiffens in the gale,
it bends--but its white flowers
are fragrant at this height.

And under and under,
the wind booms:
it whistles, it thunders,
it growls--it presses the grass
beneath its great feet.

II

I said:
for ever and for ever, must I follow you
through the stones?

I catch at you--you lurch:
you are quicker than my hand-grasp.

I wondered at you.
I shouted--dear--mysterious--beautiful--
white myrtle-flesh.

I was splintered and torn:
the hill-path mounted
swifter than my feet.

Could a daemon avenge this hurt,
I would cry to him--could a ghost,
I would shout--O evil,
follow this god,
taunt him with his evil and his vice.

III

Shall I hurl myself from here,
shall I leap and be nearer you?
Shall I drop, beloved, beloved,
ankle against ankle?
Would you pity me, O white breast?

If I woke, would you pity me,
would our eyes meet?

Have you heard,
do you know how I climbed this rock?
My breath caught, I lurched forward--
stumbled in the ground-myrtle.

Have you heard, O god seated on the cliff,
how far toward the ledges of your house,
how far I had to walk?

IV

Over me the wind swirls.
I have stood on your portal
and I know--
you are further than this,
still further on another cliff.

TIDES[1]

by George Middleton

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Atlantic Book of Modern Plays*, by Various

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by permission of the author and of Messrs. Henry Holt and Company, the publishers, from the volume, _Masks and Other One-Act Plays_ (1920).]

CHARACTERS

WILLIAM WHITE, a famous Internationalist

HILDA, his wife

WALLACE, their son

SCENE: _At the Whites'; spring, 1917. A simply furnished study. The walls are lined with bookshelves, indicating, by their improvised quality, that they have been increased as occasion demanded. On these are stacked, in addition to the books themselves, many files of papers, magazines, and "reports." The large work-table, upon which rests a double student lamp and a telephone, is conspicuous. A leather couch with pillows is opposite, pointing toward a doorway which leads into the living-room. There is also a doorway in back, which apparently opens on the hallway beyond. The room is comfortable in spite of its general disorder: it is essentially the workshop of a busy man of public affairs. The strong sunlight of a spring day comes in through the window, flooding the table._

WILLIAM WHITE _is standing by the window, smoking a pipe. He is about fifty, of striking appearance: the visual incarnation of the popular conception of a leader of men. There is authority and strength in the lines of his face; his whole personality is commanding; his voice has all the modulations of a well-trained orator; his gestures are sweeping--for, even in private conversation, he is habitually conscious of an audience. Otherwise, he is simple and engaging, with some indication of his humble origin._

On the sofa opposite, with a letter in her hand, HILDA WHITE, _his wife, is seated. She is somewhat younger in fact, though in appearance she is as one who has been worn a bit by the struggle of many years. Her manner contrasts with her husband's: her inheritance of delicate refinement is ever present in her soft voice and gentle gesture. Yet she, too, suggests strength--the sort which will endure all for a fixed intention._

It is obvious throughout that she and her husband have been happy comrades in their life together, and that a deep fundamental bond has united them in spite of the different social spheres from which each has sprung.

WHITE (_seeing she has paused_). Go on, dear; go on. Let's hear all of it.

HILDA. Oh, what's the use, Will? You know how differently he feels about the war.

WHITE (_with quiet sarcasm_). But it's been so many years since your respectable brother has honored me even with the slightest allusion--

HILDA. If you care for what he says--(_continuing to read the letter_)--"Remember, Hilda, you are an American. I don't suppose your husband considers that an honor; but I do."

WHITE (_interrupting_). And what kind of an American has he been in times of peace? He's wrung forty per cent profit out of his factory and fought every effort of the workers to organize. Ah, these smug hypocrites!

HILDA (_reading_). "His violent opposition to America going in has been disgrace enough--"

WHITE. But his war profits were all right. Oh, yes.

HILDA. Let me finish, dear, since you want it. (_Reading_) "--been disgrace enough. But now that we're in, I'm writing in the faint hope, if you are not too much under his influence, that you will persuade him to keep his mouth shut. This country will tolerate no difference of opinion now. You radicals had better get on board the band wagon. It's prison or acceptance." (_She stops reading._) He's right, dear. There will be nothing more intolerant than a so-called democracy at war.

WHITE. By God! It's superb! Silence for twenty years and now he writes his poor misguided sister for fear she will be further disgraced by her radical husband.

HILDA. We mustn't descend to his bitterness.

WHITE. No: I suppose I should resuscitate the forgotten doctrine of forgiving my enemies.

HILDA. He's not your enemy; he merely looks at it all differently.

WHITE. I was thinking of his calm contempt for me these twenty years--ever since you married me--"out of your class," as he called it.

HILDA. Oh, hush, Will. I've been so happy with you I can bear him no ill will. Besides, doesn't his attitude seem natural? You mustn't forget that no man in this country has fought his class more than you. That hurts--especially coming from an _acquired_

relative.

WHITE. Yes; that aggravates the offense. And I'll tell you something you may not know. (_Bitterly_) Whenever I've spoken against privilege and wealth it's been his pudgy, comfortable face I've shaken my fist at. He's been so damned comfortable all his life.

HILDA. (_She looks at him in surprise._) Why, Will, you surely don't envy him his comfort, do you? I can't make you out. What's come over you these last weeks? You've always been above such personal bitterness; even when you were most condemned and ridiculed. If it were anybody but you I'd think you had done something you were ashamed of.

WHITE. What do you mean?

HILDA. Haven't you sometimes noticed that is what bitterness to another means: a failure within oneself? (_He goes over to chair and sits without answering._) I can think of you beaten by outside things--that sort of failure we all meet; but somehow I can never think of you failing yourself. You've been so brave and self-reliant: you've fought so hard for the truth.

WHITE (_tapping letter_). But he thinks he knows the truth, too.

HILDA. He's also an intense nature.

WHITE (_thoughtfully after a pause_). Yet there is _some_ truth in what he says.

HILDA (_smiling_). But you didn't like it--coming from him?

WHITE. It will be different with you and me now that America's gone in.

HILDA. Yes. It will be harder for us here; for hate is always farthest from the trenches. But you and I are not the sort who would compromise to escape the persecution which is the resource of the non-combatant.

(_The phone rings: he looks at his watch._)

WHITE. That's for me.

HILDA. Let me. (_She goes._) It may be Wallace. (_At phone_) Yes: this is 116 Chelsea. Long Distance? (_He starts as she says to him_) It must be our boy. (_At phone_) Who? Oh--Mr. William White? Yes: he'll be here. (_She hangs up receiver._) She'll ring when she gets the connection through.

WHITE (_turning away_). It takes so long these days.

HILDA. Funny he didn't ask for me.

WHITE. What made you think it was Wallace?

HILDA. I took it for granted. He must be having a hard time at college with all the boys full of war fever.

WHITE. And a father with my record.

HILDA. He should be proud of the example. He has more than other boys to cling to these days when everybody is losing his head as the band plays and the flag is waved. He won't be carried away by it. He'll remember all we taught him. Ah, Will, when I think we now have conscription--as they have in Germany--I thank God every night our boy is too young for the draft.

WHITE. But when his time comes what will he do?

HILDA (_calmly_). He will do it with courage.

WHITE (_referring to her brother's letter_). Either prison or acceptance!

HILDA. I would rather have my son in prison than have him do what he felt was wrong. Wouldn't you?

WHITE (_evasively_). We won't have to face that problem for two years.

HILDA. And when it comes--if he falters--I'll give him these notes of that wonderful speech you made at the International Conference in 1910. (_Picking it up_) I was looking through it only this morning.

WHITE (_troubled_). Oh, that speech.

HILDA (_glancing through it with enthusiasm_). "All wars are imperialistic in origin. Do away with overseas investments, trade routes, private control of ammunition factories, secret diplomacy--"

WHITE. Don't you see that's all dead wood?

HILDA (_not heeding him_). This part gave me new strength when I thought of Wallace. (_Reading with eloquence_) "War will stop when young men put Internationalism above Nationality, the law of God above the dictates of statesmen, the law of love above the law of hate, the law of self-sacrifice above the law of profit. There must be no boundaries in man's thought. Let the young men of the world once throw down their arms, let them once refuse to point their guns at human hearts, and all the boundaries of the world will melt away and peace will find a resting-place in the hearts of men!"

WHITE (_taking it from her_). And I made you believe it! What silly prophets we radicals were. (_He tears it up._) Mere scraps of paper, dear; scraps of paper, now.

HILDA. But it was the truth; it still is the truth.

WHITE. Hilda, there's something I want to talk over very, very seriously with you. I've been putting it off.

HILDA. Yes, dear? (_The outer door is heard to bang._) Listen: wasn't that the front door?

WHITE. Perhaps it's the maid?

HILDA (_a bit nervously_). No: she's upstairs. No one rang. Please see.

WHITE (_smiling_). Now don't worry! It can't possibly be the Secret Service.

HILDA. One never knows in war times what to expect. I sometimes feel I am in a foreign country.

(WHITE _goes slowly to the door in back and opens it._ WALLACE, _their son, with valise in hand, is standing there, as if he had hesitated to enter._

He is a fine clean-cut young fellow, with his father's physical endowment and his mother's spiritual intensity. The essential note he strikes is that of honesty. It is apparent he is under the pressure of a momentous decision which has brought him unexpectedly home from college.)

WHITE. Wallace!

WALLACE (_shaking hands_). Hello, Dad!

HILDA. Wallace! My boy!

(WALLACE _drops valise and goes to his mother's arms._)

WALLACE (_with deep feeling_). Mother!

WHITE (_after a pause_). Well, boy; this is unexpected. We were just talking of you.

WALLACE. Were you?

HILDA. I'm so glad to see you, so glad.

WALLACE. Yes--yes--but--

WHITE. There's nothing the matter?

HILDA. You've had trouble at college?

WALLACE. Not exactly. But I couldn't stand it there. I've left--for good.

WHITE. I was sure that would happen.

HILDA. Tell us. You know we'll understand.

WALLACE. Dad, if you don't mind, I'd like to talk it over with mother first.

WHITE. Of course, old fellow, that's right. She'll stand by you just as she's always stood by me--all these years. (_He kisses her._) I--I--

(_He smooths her hair gently, looking into her eyes as she smiles up at him._)

We mustn't let this war hurt all we've had together--you and I--

HILDA (_smiling and turning towards her son_). And Wallace.

WHITE. And Wallace. Yes. (WALLACE _looks away guiltily._) Let me know when the phone comes.

(_He goes out hastily. She closes the door after him and then comes to WALLACE, who has sat down, indicating he is troubled._)

HILDA. They made it hard for you at college?

WALLACE. I don't know how to tell you.

HILDA. I understand. The flag waving, the patriotic speeches, the billboards advertising the glory of war, the call of adventure offered to youth, the pressure of your friends--all made it hard for you to be called a slacker.

WALLACE. No, mother. I wasn't afraid of what they could call me. That was easy.

HILDA (_proudly_). You are your father's son!

WALLACE. Mother, I can't stand the thought of killing, you know that. And I couldn't forget all you've told me. That's why I've had to think this out all these months alone; why I've hesitated longer than most fellows. The only thing I was really afraid of was being wrong. But now I know I'm right and I'm going clean through to the limit.

HILDA. As your father said, I'll stand by you--whatever it

is--if only you feel it's right.

WALLACE. Will you? Will you, mother? No matter what happens? (_She nods._) I knew you would. (_Taking her hand_) Then, mother, listen. I've volunteered.

HILDA (_shocked_). Volunteered!

WALLACE. Yes. I leave for training-camp to-night.

HILDA. To-night?

WALLACE. Yes, mother. Once I made up my mind, I couldn't wait to be drafted. I wanted to offer myself. I didn't want to be made to go.

HILDA (_hardly grasping it_). But you are too young.

WALLACE. I lied about my age. You and father can stop me if you tell the truth. That's why I've come back. I want you to promise you won't tell.

HILDA. _You_ ask me to aid you in what I don't believe?

WALLACE. But you said you'd stick by me if _I_ thought it was right.

HILDA. But--

WALLACE (_with fervor_). And I tell you, mother, I do feel it was right for America to go in. I see now we ought to have declared war when they crushed Belgium. Yes; we ought to have gone in when the Lusitania was sunk. But we've been patient. The President tried to keep us out of it until we _had_ to go in to save our self-respect. We had to go in to show we were men of honor, not pussy-cats. We had to go in to show the world the Stars and Stripes wasn't a dish-rag on which the Germans could dry their bloody hands!

HILDA (_gazing at him incredulously_). You hate them as much as that?

WALLACE. Hate? No, mother, no. (_As if questioning himself_) I really haven't any hate for the German _people_. People are just people everywhere, I suppose, and they're tricked and fooled by their rotten government, as the President says.

HILDA. Then why fight them?

WALLACE. Because they're standing back of their government, doing what it says. And they've got to be licked to show them what kind of a government they have.

HILDA. At least you have no hate in your heart--that's something.

WALLACE. Oh, yes, I have, mother. But it isn't for the poor devils I've got to shoot. It's for the stay-at-home fellow here in America who sits in a comfortable armchair, who applauds patriotic sentiment, cheers the flag, and does nothing for his country but hate and hate--while we fight for him. That's the fellow I'll hate all right when I sit in the trenches. And that's why I couldn't look myself in the face if I stayed out a day longer; why I've got to go in; why I'm going to die if I must, because everybody ought to be willing to die for what he believes.

HILDA. You are my son, too! For I would willingly have died if it could have kept us out of this war.

WALLACE. Yes. I am your son, too. And that's why you wouldn't respect me if I didn't go through.

HILDA. No. I wouldn't have respected you. But--but--(She breaks a bit, then controls herself.) You are quite sure you're doing what's right?

WALLACE (tenderly). Would I have been willing to hurt you like this?

HILDA (holding him close to her). My boy; my boy!

WALLACE. It'll be all right, mother.

HILDA. Ah, yes. It will be all right. Nothing matters in time: it's only the moments that hurt.

WALLACE (after a pause). Then you won't tell my real age, or interfere?

HILDA. I respect your right to decide your own life.

WALLACE (joyed). Mother!

HILDA. I respect your dedication; your willingness to sacrifice for your beliefs. Why, Wallace, it would be a crime for me to stand in your way--even with my mother's love. (He kisses her.) Do it all as cleanly as you can. I'll hope and pray that you'll come back to me. (Half breaking down and taking him in her arms). Oh, my boy; my boy. Let me hold you. You'll never know how hard it is for a mother.

WALLACE (gently). But other mothers send their boys.

HILDA. Most of them believe in what their sons are fighting for. Mothers have got to believe in it; or else how could they stand the thought of bayonets stuck into the bodies they brought forth in their own blood? (There is a pause till she controls herself.)

I'll help you get your things together.

WALLACE. And father?

HILDA. He will be angry.

WALLACE. But you will make him understand?

HILDA. I'll try. Yet you must be patient with him if he doesn't understand. Don't ever forget his long fight against all kinds of Prussianism when you hear him reviled by those who have always hated his radicalism and who, now, under the guise of patriotism, are trying to render him useless for further attacks on them after the war. He's been persecuted so by them--even back in the days when our press was praising Germany and our distinguished citizens were dining at the Emperor's table. Don't forget all this, my boy. These days are hard for him--and me--harder perhaps than for you who go out to die in glory and praise. There are no flags for us, no music that stirs, no applause; but we too suffer in silence for what we believe. And it is only the strongest who can survive.--Now call your father.

WALLACE (_goes to door_). Dad! (_He leaves door open and turns to his mother._) I'll be getting my things together. (_There is a pause._ WHITE _enters._) Dad, mother has something to ask you. (_He looks from father to mother._) Thanks, little mother.

(_He kisses her and goes out, taking the valise. His father and mother stand facing each other._)

HILDA. Wallace has volunteered. (_He looks at her keenly._) He has lied about his age. He wants us to let him go.

WHITE. Volunteered?

HILDA. Yes; he leaves to-night.

WHITE (_after a pause_). And what have you told him?

HILDA. That he must go.

WHITE. You can say that?

HILDA. It is the way he sees it.

WHITE (_going to her sympathetically_). Hilda.

HILDA (_looking up at him tenderly_). O Will, do you remember when he was born? (_He soothes her._) And all we nursed him through afterwards; and all we taught him; all we tried to show him about war. (_With a shrug of her shoulders_) None of it has mattered.

WHITE. War is stronger than all that.

HILDA. So we mustn't blame him. You won't blame him?

WHITE. He fears I will?

HILDA. He has always feared you a little, though he loves you deeply. You mustn't oppose him, dear. You won't?

WHITE (_wearily_). Is there any use opposing anybody or anything these days?

HILDA. We must wait till the storm passes.

WHITE. That's never been my way.

HILDA. No. You've fought all your life. But now we must sit silent together and wait; wait for our boy to come back. Will, think of it; we are going to have a boy "over there," too.

WHITE. Hilda, hasn't it ever struck you that we may have been all wrong? (_She looks at him, as she holds his hand._) What could these frail hands do? How could we poor little King Canutes halt this tide that has swept over the world? Isn't it better, after all, that men should fight themselves out; bring such desolation upon themselves that they will be forced to see the futility of war? May it not become so terrible that men--the workers, I mean--will throw down their worn-out weapons of their own accord? Won't permanent peace come through bitter experience rather than talk--talk--talk?

HILDA (_touching the torn pages of his speech and smiling_). Here is your answer to your own question.

WHITE. Oh, that was all theory. We're in now. You say yourself we can't oppose it. Isn't it better if we try to direct the current to our own ends rather than sink by trying to swim against it?

HILDA. Oh, yes; it would be easier for one who _could_ compromise.

WHITE. But haven't we radicals been too intolerant of compromise?

HILDA. That has been _your_ strength. And it is your strength I'm relying on now that Wallace--Shall I call him?

WHITE (_significantly_). No; wait.

HILDA (_apprehensive at his turn_). Oh, yes. Before he came you said there was something--(_The phone rings. They both look at it._) That's for you.

WHITE (_not moving_). Yes.

HILDA _hardly believing his attitide_). Is--is it private?

WHITE. No. Perhaps it will be easier this way. (_He hesitates, then goes to phone as she stands expectant._) Yes. Yes. Long Distance? Washington? (_Her lips repeat the word._) Yes. This is William White. Hello. Yes. Is this the Secretary speaking? Oh, I appreciate the honor of having you confirm it personally. Senator Bough is chairman? At his request? Ah, yes; war makes strange bedfellows. Yes. The passport and credentials? Oh, I'll be ready. Yes. Good-bye.

(_He hangs up the receiver and looks at her._)

HILDA. You, too!

WHITE. I've been trying to tell you these last weeks; but I couldn't somehow.

HILDA. You were ashamed?

WHITE. No, dear; only I knew it would hurt you.

HILDA. I'm not thinking of myself but of you. You are going to be part of this war?

WHITE. I'm going to do what I can to help finish it.

HILDA. By compromising with the beliefs of a lifetime?

WHITE. No, dear; not that. I've accepted the appointment on this commission because I'm going to accept facts.

HILDA. Have the facts of war changed, or is it you?

WHITE. Neither has changed; but I'm going to act differently. I'm going to be part of it. Yes. I'm going to help direct the current.

HILDA. I can't believe what I am hearing. Is it you, William White, speaking? You who, for twenty years, have stood against all war!

WHITE. Yes.

HILDA. And now, when the test comes, you are going to lend yourself to it! You of all men!

WHITE. Hilda, dear; I didn't expect you to accept it easily; but I think I can make you see if you will let me.

HILDA (_poignantly_). If I will let you! Why, Will, I must understand; I must.

WHITE. Perhaps it will be difficult at first--with your standards.

HILDA. But my standards were yours, Will. You gave them to me. You taught me. You took a young girl who loved you. You showed her the truth, and she followed you and has followed you gladly through hard years of struggle and poverty because of those ideals. And now you talk of my standards! Will, don't you see, I must understand?

WHITE. Dear, standards are relative things; they differ with circumstance.

HILDA. Have your ideals only been old clothes you change to suit the weather?

WHITE. It's the end we must keep in mind. I haven't changed or compromised one bit in that. I'm working in changed conditions, that's all; working with all my heart to do away with all war.

HILDA. By fighting one?

WHITE (_with eloquence_). Yes. Because it is necessary. I've come to see we can't argue war out of the world with words. We've got to beat it out of the world. It can't be done with our hands lifted up in prayer; it can only be done with iron hands crushing it down. War is the mood of the world. Well, I'm going to fight in my fashion. And when it is over, I'm going to keep on fighting; for the next war will be greater than this. It will be economic revolution. It will be the war of capital and labor. And I mean to be ready.

HILDA (_listening incredulously_). And to get ready you are willing to link arms now with Senator Bough--a man you once called the lackey of Wall Street--a man who has always opposed every democratic principle.

WHITE. Yes. Don't you see the Government is beginning to realize it can't do without us? Don't you see my appointment is an acknowledgment of the rising tide of radicalism in the world? Don't you see, with the prestige that will come to me from this appointment, I will have greater power after the war; power to bring about the realization of all our dreams; power to demand--even at the Peace table itself, perhaps--that all wars must end?

HILDA. Do you actually believe you will have any power with your _own_ people when you have compromised them for a temporary expediency?

WHITE (_with a gesture_). The leader must be wiser than the people who follow.

HILDA. So, contempt for your people is the first thing your new power has brought you! (_He makes a gesture of denial._) You feel you are above them--not of them. Do you believe for a moment that Senator Bough has anything but contempt for you, too?

WHITE (_confidently_). He needs me.

HILDA. Needs you? Don't you understand why he had you appointed on that committee? He wanted to get you out of the way.

WHITE. Isn't that an acknowledgment of my power?

HILDA. Yes. You're a great asset now. You're a "reformed" radical. Why, Will, he'll use you in the capitals of Europe to advertise his liberalism; just as the prohibitionist exhibits a reformed drunkard.

WHITE. And I tell you, Hilda, after the war I shall be stronger than he is, stronger than any of them.

HILDA. No man is strong unless he does what he feels is right. No, no, Will; you've convicted yourself with your own eloquence. You've wanted to do this for some reason. But it isn't the one you've told me. No; no.

WHITE (_angrily_). You doubt my sincerity?

HILDA. No; only the way you have read yourself.

WHITE. Well, if you think I've tried to make it easy for myself you are mistaken. Is it easy to pull out of the rut and habit of years? Easy to know my friends will jeer and say I've sold out? Easy to have you misunderstand? (_Goes to her._) Hilda, I'm doing this for their good. I'm doing it--just as Wallace is--because I feel it's right.

HILDA. No; you shouldn't say that. You are not doing this for the same reason Wallace is. He believes in this war. He has accepted it all simply without a question. If you had seen the look in his eyes, you would have known he was a dedicated spirit; there was no shadow, no doubt; it was pure flame. But you! You believe differently! You can't hush the mind that for twenty years has thought no war ever could henceforth be justified. You can't give yourself to this war without tricking yourself with phrases. You see power in it and profit for yourself. (_He protests._) That's your own confession. You are only doing what is expedient--not what is right. Oh, Will, don't compare your motives with those of our son. I sent him forth, without a word of protest, because he wishes to die for his own ideals: you are killing your own ideals for the ideals of others! (_She turns away._) Oh, Will, that's what hurts. If you were only like him, I--I could stand it.

WHITE (_quietly, after a pause_). I can't be angry at you--even

when you say such things. You've been too much a part of my life, and work, and I love you, Hilda. You know that, don't you, dear? (_He sits beside her and takes her hand._) I knew it would be difficult to make you understand. Only once have I lacked courage, and that was when I felt myself being drawn into this and they offered me the appointment. For then I saw I must tell you. You know I never have wanted to cause you pain. But when you asked me to let Wallace go, I thought you would understand my going, too.--Oh, perhaps our motives are different; he is young; war has caught his imagination; but, I, too, see a duty, a way to accomplish my ideals.

HILDA. Let's leave ideals out of this now. It's like bitter enemies praying to the same God as they kill each other.

WHITE. Yes. War is full of ironies. I see that: Wallace can't. It's so full of mixed motives, good and bad. Yes. I'll grant all that. Only, America has gone in. The whole tide was against us, dear. It is sweeping over the world: a brown tide of khaki sweeping everything before it. All my life I've fought against the current. (_Wearily_) And now that I've gone in, too, my arms seem less tired. Yes; and except for the pain I've caused you, I've never in all my life felt so--so happy.

(_Then she understands. She slowly turns to him, with tenderness in her eyes._)

HILDA. Oh, now, Will, I do understand. Now I see the real reason for what you've done.

WHITE (_defensively_). I've given the real reason.

HILDA (_her heart going out to him_). You poor tired man. My dear one. Forgive me if I made it difficult for you, if I said cruel words. I ought to have guessed; ought to have seen what life has done to you. (_He looks up, not understanding her words_). Those hands of yours first dug a living out of the ground. Then they built houses and grew strong because you were a workman--a man of the people. You saw injustice, and all your life you fought against those who had the power to inflict it: the press; the comfortable respectables, like my brother; and even those of your own group who opposed you--you fought them all. And they look at you as an outsider, an alien in your own country. O Will, I know how hard it has been for you to be always on the defensive, against the majority. It is hard to live alone, away from the herd. It does tire one to the bone and make one envious of the comfort and security they find by being together.

WHITE. Yes--but--

HILDA. Now the war comes and with it a chance to get back; to be part of the majority; to be welcomed with open arms by those who have fought you; to go back with honor and praise. And, yes, to

have the warmth and comfort of the crowd. That's the real reason you're going in. You're tired and worn out with the fight. I know. I understand now.

WHITE (_earnestly_). If I thought it was that, I'd kill myself.

HILDA. There's been enough killing already. I have to understand it somehow to accept it at all.

(_He stares at her, wondering at her words. She smiles. He goes to a chair and sits down, gazing before him. The music of Over There is now heard outside in the street, approaching nearer and nearer. It is a military band. WALLACE excitedly rushes in dressed in khaki._)

WALLACE. Mother, mother. The boys are coming down the street. (_Sees father._) Dad! Mother has told you?

HILDA (_calmly_). Yes; I've told him.

WALLACE. And you're going to let me go, Dad?

HILDA. Yes.

WALLACE. Oh, thanks, Dad (_grasping his hand_).

I knew mother would make you see. (_Music nearer._) Listen! Isn't that a great tune? Lifts you up on your feet and carries you over there. Gee, it just gets into a fellow and makes him want to run for his gun and charge over the top. (_He goes to balcony._) Look! They're nearing here; all ready to sail with the morning tide. They've got their helmets on. You can't see the end of them coming down the avenue. Oh, thank God, I'm going to be one of them soon. Thank God! I'm going to fight for Uncle Sam and the Stars and Stripes. (_Calls off_) Hurrah! (_To them_) Oh, I wish I had a flag. Why haven't we got a flag here?--Hurrah!!

(_As he goes out on the balcony the music plays louder. HILDA has gone to WHITE during this, and stands behind him, with her arms down his arms, as he sits there, gazing before him._)

HILDA (_fervently_). Oh, Will, if I could only feel it as he does!!

(_The music begins to trail off as WHITE tenderly takes hold of her hands._)

[CURTAIN]

THE TOWN IN THE LIBRARY IN THE TOWN IN THE LIBRARY

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Nine Unlikely Tales*, by E. Nesbit

ROSAMUND and Fabian were left alone in the library. You may not believe this; but I advise you to believe everything I tell you, because it is true. Truth is stranger than story-books, and when you grow up you will hear people say this till you grow quite sick of listening to them: you will then want to write the strangest story that ever was—just to show that some stories can be stranger than truth.

Mother was obliged to leave the children alone, because Nurse was ill with measles, which seems a babyish thing for a grown-up nurse to have—but it is quite true. If I had wanted to make up anything I could have said she was ill of a broken heart or a brain-fever, which always happens in books. But I wish to speak the truth even if it sounds silly. And it was measles.

Mother could not stay with the children, because it was Christmas Eve, and on that day a lot of poor old people came up to get their Christmas presents, tea and snuff, and flannel petticoats, and warm capes, and boxes of needles and cottons and things like that. Generally the children helped to give out the presents, but this year Mother was afraid they might be going to have measles themselves, and measles is a nasty forward illness with no manners at all. You can catch it from a person before they know they've got it, and if Rosamund and Fabian had been going to have it they might have given it to all the old men and women who came up to get their Christmas presents. And measles is a present no old men or women want to have given them, even at Christmas time, no matter how old they may be. They would not mind brain-fever or a broken heart so much perhaps—because it is more interesting. But no one can think it interesting to have measles, at any rate till you come to the part where they give you jelly and boiled sole.

So the children were left alone. Before Mother went away she said—

“Look here, dears, you may play with your bricks, or make pictures with your pretty blocks that kind Uncle Thomas gave you, but you must not touch the two top-drawers of the bureau. Now don't forget. And if you're good you shall have tea with me, and perhaps there will be cake. Now you will be good, won't you?”

Fabian and Rosamund promised faithfully that they would be very good and that they would not touch the two top-drawers, and Mother went away to see about the flannel petticoats and the tea and snuff and tobacco and things. When the children were left alone, Fabian said—

“I am going to be very good, I shall be much more good than Mother expects me to.”

“We won't look in the drawers,” said Rosamund, stroking the shiny top of the bureau.

"We won't even think about the insides of the drawers," said Fabian. He stroked the bureau too and his fingers left four long streaks on it, because he had been eating toffee.

"I suppose," he said presently, "we may open the two bottom drawers? Mother couldn't have made a mistake—could she?"

So they opened the two bottom drawers just to be sure that Mother hadn't made a mistake, and to see whether there was anything in the bottom drawers that they ought not to look at.

But the bottom drawer of all had only old magazines in it. And the next to the bottom drawer had a lot of papers in it. The children knew at once by the look of the papers that they belonged to Father's great work about the Domestic Life of the Ancient Druids, and they knew it was not right—or even interesting—to try to read other people's papers.

So they shut the drawers and looked at each other, and Fabian said, "I think it would be right to play with the bricks and the pretty blocks that Uncle Thomas gave us."

But Rosamund was younger than Fabian, and she said, "I am tired of the blocks, and I am tired of Uncle Thomas. I would rather look in the drawers."

"So would I," said Fabian. And they stood looking at the bureau.

Perhaps you don't know what a bureau is—children learn very little at school nowadays—so I will tell you that a bureau is a kind of chest of drawers. Sometimes it has a bookcase on the top of it, and instead of the two little top corner drawers like the chests of drawers in a bedroom it has a sloping lid, and when it is quite open you pull out two little boards underneath—and then it makes a sort of shelf for people to write letters on. The shelf lies quite flat, and lets you see little drawers inside with mother of pearl handles—and a row of pigeon holes—which are not holes pigeons live in, but places for keeping the letters carrier-pigeons could carry round their necks if they liked). And there is very often a tiny cupboard in the middle of the bureau, with a pattern on the door in different coloured woods. So now you know.

Fabian stood first on one leg and then on the other, till Rosamund said—

"Well, you might as well pull up your stockings."

So he did. His stockings were always just like a concertina or a very expensive photographic camera, but he used to say it was not his fault, and I suppose he knew best. Then he said—

"I say, Rom! mother only said we weren't to touch the two top-drawers——"

"I should like to be good," said Rosamund.

"I _mean_ to be good," said Fabian. "But if you took the little thin poker that is not kept for best you could put it through one of the brass handles and I could hold the other handle with the tongs. And then we could open the drawer without touching it."

"So we could! How clever you are, Fabe," said Rosamund. And she admired her brother very much. So they took the poker and the tongs. The front of the bureau got a little scratched, but the top drawer came open, and there they saw two boxes with glass tops and narrow gold paper going all round; though you could only see paper shavings through the glass they knew it was soldiers. Besides these boxes there was a doll and a donkey standing on a green grass plot that had wooden wheels, and a little wicker-work doll's cradle, and some brass cannons, and a bag that looked like marbles, and some flags, and a mouse that seemed as though it moved with clockwork; only, of course, they had promised not to touch the drawer, so they could not make sure. There was a wooden box, too, and it was wrong way up and on the bottom of it was written in pencil, "Vill: and anim: 5/9-1/2." They looked at each other, and Fabian said:

"I wish it was to-morrow!"

You have seen that Fabian was quite a clever boy; and he knew at once that these were the Christmas presents which Santa Claus had brought for him and Rosamund. But Rosamund said, "Oh dear, I wish we hadn't!"

However, she consented to open the other drawer—without touching it, of course, because she had promised faithfully—and when, with the poker and tongs, the other drawer came open, there were large wooden boxes—the kind that hold raisins and figs—and round boxes with paper on—smooth on the top and folded in pleats round the edge; and the children knew what was inside without looking. Every one knows what candied fruit looks like on the outside of the box. There were square boxes, too—the kind that have crackers in—with a cracker going off on the lid, very different in size and brightness from what it does really, for, as no doubt you know, a cracker very often comes in two quite calmly, without any pop at all, and then you only have the motto and the sweet, which is never nice. Of course, if there is anything else in the cracker, such as brooches or rings, you have to let the little girl who sits next you at supper have it.

When they had pushed back the drawer Fabian said—

"Let us pull out the writing drawer and make a castle."

So they pulled the drawer out and put it on the floor. Please do not try to do this if your father has a bureau, because it leads to trouble. It was only because this one was broken that they were able to do it.

Then they began to build. They had the two boxes of bricks—the wooden bricks with the pillars and the coloured glass windows, and the

rational bricks which are made of clay like tiles, and their father called them the All-Wool bricks, which seems silly, only of course grown-up people always talk sense. When all the bricks were used up they got the pretty picture blocks that kind Uncle Thomas gave them, and they built with these; but one box of blocks does not go far. Picture blocks are only good for building, except just at first. When you have made the pictures a few times you know exactly how they go, and then what's the good? This is a fault which belongs to many very expensive toys. These blocks had six pictures—Windsor Castle with the Royal Standard hoisted; ducks in a pond, with a very handsome green and blue drake; Rebecca at the well; a snowball fight—but none of the boys knew how to chuck a snowball; the Harvest Home; and the Death of Nelson.

These did not go far, as I said. There are six times as few blocks as there are pictures, because every block has six sides. If you don't understand this it shows they don't teach arithmetic at your school, or else that you don't do your home lessons.

But the best of a library is the books. Rosamund and Fabian made up with books. They got Shakespeare in fourteen volumes, and Rollin's "Ancient History," and Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," and "The Beauties of Literature" in fifty-six fat little volumes, and they built not only a castle, but a town—and a big town—that presently towered high above them on the top of the bureau.

"It's almost big enough to get into," said Fabian, "if we had some steps." So they made steps with the "British Essayists," the "Spectator," and the "Rambler," and the "Observer," and the "Tatler"; and when the steps were done they walked up them.

You may think that they could not have walked up these steps and into a town they had built themselves, but I assure you people have often done it, and anyway this is a true story. They had made a lovely gateway with two fat volumes of Macaulay and Milton's poetical works on top, and as they went through it they felt all the feelings which people have to feel when they are tourists and see really fine architecture. (Architecture means buildings, but it is a grander word, as you see.)

Rosamund and Fabian simply walked up the steps into the town they had built. Whether they got larger or the town got smaller, I do not pretend to say. When they had gone under the great gateway they found that they were in a street which they could not remember building. But they were not disagreeable about it, and they said it was a very nice street all the same.

There was a large square in the middle of the town, with seats, and there they sat down, in the town they had made, and wondered how they could have been so clever as to build it. Then they went to the walls of the town—high, strong walls built of the Encyclopedia and the Biographical Dictionary—and far away over the brown plain of the carpet they saw a great thing like a square mountain. It was very shiny. And as they looked at it a great slice of it pushed itself out, and Fabian

saw the brass handles shine, and he said:

“Why, Rom, that’s the bureau.”

“It’s larger than I want it to be,” said Rosamund, who was a little frightened. And indeed it did seem to be an extra size, for it was higher than the town.

The drawer of the great mountain bureau opened slowly, and the children could see something moving inside; then they saw the glass lid of one of the boxes go slowly up till it stood on end and looked like one side of the Crystal Palace, it was so large—and inside the box they saw something moving. The shavings and tissue-paper and the cotton-wool heaved and tossed like a sea when it is rough and you wish you had not come for a sail. And then from among the heaving whiteness came out a blue soldier, and another and another. They let themselves down from the drawer with ropes of shavings, and when they were all out there were fifty of them—foot soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets, as well as a thin captain on a horse and a sergeant and a drummer.

The drummer beat his drum and the whole company formed fours and marched straight for the town. They seemed to be quite full-size soldiers—indeed, _extra_ large.

The children were very frightened. They left the walls and ran up and down the streets of the town trying to find a place to hide.

“Oh, there’s our very own house,” cried Rosamund at last; “we shall be safe there.” She was surprised as well as pleased to find their own house inside the town they had built.

So they ran in, and into the library, and there was the bureau and the castle they had built, and it was all small and quite the proper size. But when they looked out of the window it was not their own street, but the one they had built; they could see two volumes of the “Beauties of Literature” and the head of Rebecca in the house opposite, and down the street was the Mausoleum they had built after the pattern given in the red and yellow book that goes with the All-Wool bricks. It was all very confusing.

Suddenly, as they stood looking out of the windows, they heard a shouting, and there were the blue soldiers coming along the street by twos, and when the Captain got opposite their house he called out—

“Fabian! Rosamund! come down!”

And they had to, for they were very much frightened.

Then the Captain said—

“We have taken this town, and you are our prisoners. Do not attempt to escape, or I don’t know what will happen to you.”

The children explained that they had built the town, so they thought it was theirs; but the captain said very politely—

“That doesn’t follow at all. It’s our town now. And I want provisions for my soldiers.”

“We haven’t any,” said Fabian, but Rosamund nudged him, and said, “Won’t the soldiers be very fierce if they are hungry?”

The Blue Captain heard her, and said—

“You are quite right, little girl. If you have any food, produce it. It will be a generous act, and may stop any unpleasantness. My soldiers are very fierce. Besides,” he added in a lower tone, speaking behind his hand, “you need only feed the soldiers in the usual way.”

When the children heard this their minds were made up.

“If you do not mind waiting a minute,” said Fabian, politely, “I will bring down any little things I can find.”

Then he took his tongs, and Rosamund took the poker, and they opened the drawer where the raisins and figs and dried fruits were—for everything in the library in the town was just the same as in the library at home—and they carried them out into the big square where the Captain had drawn up his blue regiment. And here the soldiers were fed. I suppose you know how tin soldiers are fed? But children learn so little at school nowadays that I daresay you don’t, so I will tell you. You just put a bit of the fig or raisin, or whatever it is, on the soldier’s tin bayonet—or his sword, if he is a cavalry man—and you let it stay on till you are tired of playing at giving the soldiers rations, and then of course you eat it for him. This was the way in which Fabian and Rosamund fed the starving blue soldiers. But when they had done so, the soldiers were as hungry as ever. Which only shows that soldiers are an ungrateful lot, and it is idle to try and make their lives better and brighter.

So then the Blue Captain, who had not had anything, even on the point of his sword, said—

“More—more, my gallant men are fainting for lack of food.”

So there was nothing for it but to bring out the candied fruits, and to feed the soldiers with them. So Fabian and Rosamund stuck bits of candied apricot and fig and pear and cherry and beetroot on the tops of the soldiers’ bayonets, and when every soldier had a piece they put a fat candied cherry on the officer’s sword. Then the children knew the soldiers would be quiet for a few minutes, and they ran back into their own house and into the library to talk to each other about what they had better do, for they both felt that the blue soldiers were a very hard-hearted set of men.

“They might shut us up in the dungeons,” said Rosamund, “and then

Mother might lock us in, when she shut up the lid of the bureau, and we should starve to death."

For they could not be sure exactly what size they were, or which library their Mother would come back to when she had given away all the flannel petticoats and things.

The dungeons were the pigeon-holes of the bureau, and the doors of them were the little "Beauties of Literature"—very heavy doors they were too.

You see the curious thing was that the children had built a town and got into it, and in it they had found their own house with the very town they had built—or one exactly like it—still on the library floor.

"I think it's all nonsense," said Rosamund. But when they looked out of the window there was the house with Windsor Castle and the head of Rebecca just opposite.

"If we could only find Mother," she said; but they knew without looking that Mother was not in the house that they were in then.

"I wish we had that mouse that looked like clockwork—and the donkey, and the other box of soldiers—perhaps they are red ones, and they would fight the blue and lick them—because red-coats are English and they always win," said Fabian.

And then Rosamund said—

"Oh, Fabe, I believe we could go into this town, too, if we tried! Let us put all the things in, and then try!"

So they went to the bureau drawer, and Rosamund got out the other box of soldiers and the mouse—it was a clockwork one—and the donkey with panniers, and put them in the town, while Fabian ate up a few odd raisins that had dropped on the floor.

When all the soldiers (they were red) were arranged on the ramparts of the little town, Fabian said—

"I am thinking of all the raisins and things on the soldiers' bayonets outside. It seems a pity not to eat the things for them."

But Rosamund said—

"No, no; let's get into this town, and perhaps we shall be safe from the blue soldiers. Oh, Fabe, never mind the raisins!"

But Fabian said, "I don't want you to come if you're frightened. I'll go alone. Who's afraid?"

So then of course Rosamund said she would come with him, so they went out and ate the things for the soldiers, leaving the Captain's cherry for the last. And when that was eaten they ran as hard as they could

back to their house and into the library, where the town was on the floor, with the little red soldiers on the ramparts.

“I’m sure we can get into this town,” cried Fabian, and sure enough they did, just as they had done into the first one. Whether they got smaller or the town got larger I leave you to decide. And it was exactly the same sort of town as the other. So now they were in a town built in a library in a house in a town built in a library in a house in a town called London—and the town they were in now had red soldiers in it and they felt quite safe, and the Union Jack was stuck up over the gateway. It was a stiff little flag they had found with some others in the bureau drawer; it was meant to be stuck in the Christmas pudding, but they had stuck it between two blocks and put it over the gate of their town. They walked about this town and found their own house, just as before, and went in, and there was the toy town on the floor; and you will see that they might have walked into that town also, but they saw that it was no good, and that they couldn’t get out that way, but would only get deeper and deeper into a nest of towns in libraries in houses in towns in libraries in houses in towns in ... and so on for always—something like Chinese puzzle-boxes multiplied by millions and millions for ever and ever. And they did not like even to think of this, because of course they would be getting further and further from home every time. And when Fabian explained all this to Rosamund she said he made her head ache, and she began to cry.

Then Fabian thumped her on the back and told her not to be a little silly, for he was a very kind brother. And he said—

“Come out and let’s see if the soldiers can tell us what to do.”

So they went out; but the red soldiers said they knew nothing but drill, and even the Red Captain said he really couldn’t advise. Then they met the clockwork mouse. He was big like an elephant, and the donkey with panniers was as big as a mastodon or a megatherium. (If they teach you anything at school of course they have taught you all about the megatherium and the mastodon.)

The Mouse kindly stopped to speak to the children, and Rosamund burst into tears again and said she wanted to go home.

The great Mouse looked down at her and said—

“I am sorry for _you_, but your brother is the kind of child that overwinds clockwork mice the very first day he has them. I prefer to stay this size.”

Then Fabian said: “On my honour, I won’t. If we get back home I’ll give you to Rosamund. That is, supposing I get you for one of my Christmas presents.”

The donkey with panniers said—

“And you won’t put coals in my panniers or unglue my feet from my green

grass-plot because I look more natural without wheels?"

"I give you my word," said Fabian, "I wouldn't think of such a thing."

"Very well," said the Mouse, "then I will tell you. It is a great secret, but there is only one way to get out of this kind of town. You—I hardly know how to explain—you—you just _walk out of the gate_, you know."

"Dear me," said Rosamund; "I never thought of that!"

So they all went to the gate of the town and walked out, and there they were in the library again. But when they looked out of the window the All-Wool Mausoleum was still to be seen, and the terrible blue soldiers.

"What are we to do now?" asked Rosamund; but the clockwork mouse and the donkey with panniers were their proper size again now (or else the children had got bigger. It is no use asking me which, for I do not know), and so of course they could not speak.

"We must walk out of this town as we did out of the other," said Fabian.

"Yes," Rosamund said; "only this town is full of blue soldiers and I am afraid of them. Don't you think it would do if we _ran_ out?"

So out they ran and down the steps that were made of the "Spectator" and the "Rambler" and the "Tatler" and the "Observer." And directly they stood on the brown library carpet they ran to the window and looked out, and they saw—instead of the building with Windsor Castle and Rebecca's head in it, and the All-Wool Mausoleum—they saw their own road with the trees without any leaves and the man was just going along lighting the lamps with the stick that the gas-light pops out of, like a bird, to roost in the glass cage at the top of the lamp-post. So they knew that they were safe at home again.

And as they stood looking out they heard the library door open, and Mother's voice saying—

"What a dreadful muddle! And what have you done with the raisins and the candied fruits?" And her voice was very grave indeed.

Now you will see that it was quite impossible for Fabian and Rosamund to explain to their mother what they had done with the raisins and things, and how they had been in a town in a library in a house in a town they had built in their own library with the books and the bricks and the pretty picture blocks kind Uncle Thomas gave them. Because they were much younger than I am, and even I have found it rather hard to explain.

So Rosamund said, "Oh, Mother, my head does ache so," and began to cry. And Fabian said nothing, but he, also, began to cry.

And Mother said, "I don't wonder your head aches, after all those sweet

things." And she looked as if she would like to cry too.

"I don't know what Daddy will say," said Mother, and then she gave them each a nasty powder and put them both to bed.

"I wonder what he will say," said Fabian just before he went to sleep.

"I don't know," said Rosamund, and, strange to say, they don't know to this hour what Daddy said. Because next day they both had measles, and when they got better every one had forgotten about what had happened on Christmas Eve. And Fabian and Rosamund had forgotten just as much as everybody else. So I should never have heard of it but for the clockwork mouse. It was he who told me the story, just as the children told it to him in the town in the library in the house in the town they built in their own library with the books and the bricks and the pretty picture blocks which were given to them by kind Uncle Thomas. And if you do not believe the story it is not my fault: I believe every word the mouse said, for I know the good character of that clockwork mouse, and I know it could not tell an untruth even if it tried.

TALK-STOPPERS.

Project Gutenberg's *My Miscellanies, Vol. 1 (of 2)*, by Wilkie Collins
1863

We hear a great deal of lamentation now-a-days, proceeding mostly from elderly people, on the decline of the Art of Conversation among us. Old ladies and gentlemen with vivid recollections of the charms of society fifty years ago, are constantly asking each other why the great talkers of their youthful days have found no successors in this inferior present time. Where--they inquire mournfully--where are the illustrious men and women gifted with a capacity for perpetual outpouring from the tongue, who used to keep enraptured audiences deluged in a flow of eloquent monologue for hours together? Where are the solo talkers, in this degenerate age of nothing but choral conversation?

The solo talkers have vanished. Nothing but the tradition of them remains, imperfectly preserved in books for the benefit of an ungrateful posterity, which reviles their surviving contemporaries, and would perhaps even have reviled the illustrious creatures themselves as Bores. If they could rise from the dead, and wag their unresting tongues among us now, would they win their reputations anew, just as easily as ever? Would they even get listeners? Would they be actually allowed to talk? I venture to say, decidedly not. They would surely be interrupted and contradicted; they would have their nearest neighbours at the dinner-table talking across them; they would find impatient people opposite, dropping things noisily, and ostentatiously

picking them up; they would hear confidential whispering, and perpetual fidgeting in distant corners, before they had got through their first half-dozen of eloquent opening sentences. Nothing appears to me so wonderful as that none of these interruptions (if we are to believe report) should ever have occurred in the good old times of the great talkers. I read long biographies of that large class of illustrious individuals whose fame is confined to the select circle of their own acquaintance, and I find that they were to a man, whatever other differences may have existed between them, all delightful talkers. I am informed that they held forth entrancingly for hours together, at all times and seasons, and that I, the gentle, constant, and patient reader, am one of the most unfortunate and pitiable of human beings in never having enjoyed the luxury of hearing them: but, strangely enough, I am never told whether they were occasionally interrupted or not in the course of their outpourings. I am left to infer that their friends sat under them just as a congregation sits under a pulpit; and I ask myself amazedly (remembering what society is at the present day), whether human nature can have changed altogether since that time. Either the reports in the biographies are one-sided and imperfect, or the race of people whom I frequently meet with now--and whom I venture to call Talk-stoppers, because their business in life seems to be the obstructing, confusing, and interrupting of all conversation--must be the peculiar and portentous growth of our own degenerate era.

Perplexed by this dilemma, when I am reading in long biographies about great talkers, I do not find myself lamenting, like my seniors, that they have left no successors in our day, or doubting irreverently, like my juniors, whether the famous performers of conversational solos were really as well worth hearing as eulogistic report would fain have us believe. The one invariable question that I put to myself under these circumstances runs thus:--Could the great talkers, if they had lived in my time, have talked at all? And the answer I receive is:--In the vast majority of cases, certainly not.

Let me not unnecessarily mention names, but let me ask, for example, if some such famous talker as, say--the Great Glib--could have discoursed uninterruptedly for five minutes together in the presence of my friend Colonel Hopkirk?

The colonel goes a great deal into society; he is the kindest and gentlest of men; but he unconsciously stops, or confuses conversation everywhere, solely in consequence of his own sociable horror of ever differing in opinion with anybody. If A. should begin by declaring black to be black, Colonel Hopkirk would be sure to agree with him, before he had half done. If B. followed, and declared black to be white, the colonel would be on his side of the question, before he had argued it out; and, if C. peaceably endeavoured to calm the dispute with a truism, and trusted that every one would at least admit that black and white in combination made grey, my ever-compliant friend would pat him on the shoulder approvingly, all the while he was talking; would declare that C.'s conclusion was, after all, the common sense of the question; and would set A. and B. furiously disputing

which of them he agreed or disagreed with now, and whether on the great Black, White, and Grey question, Colonel Hopkirk could really be said to have any opinion at all.

How could the Great Glib hold forth in the company of such a man as this? Let us suppose that delightful talker, with a few of his admirers (including, of course, the writer of his biography), and Colonel Hopkirk, to be all seated at the same table; and let us say that one of the admirers is anxious to get the mellifluous Glib to discourse on capital punishment for the benefit of the company. The admirer begins, of course, on the approved method of stating the objections to capital punishment, and starts the subject in this manner.

"I was dining out, the other day, Mr. Glib, where capital punishment turned up as a topic of conversation----"

"Ah!" says Colonel Hopkirk, "a dreadful necessity--yes, yes, yes, I see--a dreadful necessity--Eh?"

"And the arguments for its abolition," continues the admirer, without noticing the interruption, "were really handled with great dexterity by one of the gentlemen present, who started, of course, with the assertion that it is unlawful, under any circumstances, to take away life----"

"Unlawful, of course!" cries the colonel. "Very well put. Yes, yes--unlawful--to be sure--so it is--unlawful, as you say."

"Unlawful, sir?" begins the Great Glib, severely. "Have I lived to this time of day, to hear that it is unlawful to protect the lives of the community, by the only certain means----?"

"No, no--O dear me, no!" says the compliant Hopkirk, with the most unblushing readiness. "Protect their lives, of course--as you say, protect their lives by the only certain means--yes, yes, I quite agree with you."

"Allow me, colonel," says another admirer, anxious to assist in starting the great talker, "allow me to remind our friend, before he takes this question in hand, that it is an argument of the abolitionists that perpetual imprisonment would answer the purpose of protecting society----"

The colonel is so delighted with this last argument that he bounds on his chair, and rubs his hands in triumph. "My dear sir!" he cries, before the last speaker can say another word, "you have hit it--you have indeed! Perpetual imprisonment--that's the thing--ah, yes, yes, yes, to be sure--perpetual imprisonment--the very thing, my dear sir--the very thing!"

"Excuse me," says a third admirer, "but I think Mr. Glib was about to speak. You were saying, sir----?"

"The whole question of capital punishment," begins the delightful talker, leaning back luxuriously in his chair, "lies in a nutshell." ("Very true," from the colonel.) "I murder one of you--say Hopkirk here." ("Ha! ha! ha!" loudly from the colonel, who thinks himself bound to laugh at a joke when he is only wanted to listen to an illustration.) "I murder Hopkirk. What is the first object of all the rest of you, who represent the community at large?" ("To have you hanged," from the colonel. "Ah, yes, to be sure! to have you hanged. Quite right! quite right!") "Is it to make me a reformed character, to teach me a trade, to wash my blood-stains off me delicately, and set me up again in society, looking as clean as the best of you? No!" ("No!" from the compliant colonel.) "Your object is clearly to prevent me from murdering any more of you. And how are you to do that most completely and certainly? Can you accomplish your object by perpetual imprisonment?" ("Ah! I thought we should all agree about it at last," cries the colonel cheerfully. "Yes, yes--nothing else for it but perpetual imprisonment, as you say.") "By perpetual imprisonment? But men have broken out of prison." ("So they have," from the colonel.) "Men have killed their gaolers; and there you have the commission of that very second murder that you wanted to prevent." ("Quite right," from the compliant Talk-Stopper. "A second murder--dreadful! dreadful!") "Imprisonment is not your certain protective remedy, then, evidently. What is?"

"Hanging!!!" cries the colonel, with another bound in his chair, and a voice that can no longer be talked down. "Hanging, to be sure! I quite agree with you. Just what I said from the first. You have hit it, my dear sir. Hanging, as you say--hanging, by all manner of means!"

Has anybody ever met Colonel Hopkirk in society? And does anybody think that the Great Glib could possibly have held forth in the company of that persistently-compliant gentleman, as he is alleged, by his admiring biographer, to have held forth in the peculiar society of his own time? The thing is clearly impossible. Let us leave Glib, congratulating him on having died when the Hopkirks of these latter days were as yet hardly weaned; let us leave him, and ascertain how some other great talker might have got on in the society of some other modern obstructor of the flow of eloquent conversation.

I have just been reading the Life, Letters, Labours, Opinions, and Table-Talk of the matchless Mr. Oily; edited--as to the Life, by his mother-in-law; as to the Letters, by his grand-daughter's husband; and as to the Labours, Opinions, and Table-Talk, by three of his intimate friends, who dined with him every other Sunday throughout the whole of his long and distinguished life. It is a very pretty book in a great many volumes, with pleasing anecdotes--not only of the eminent man himself, but of all his family connections as well. His shortest notes are preserved, and the shortest notes of others to him. "My dear O., how is your poor head? Yours, P." "My dear P., hotter than ever. Yours, O." And so on. Portraits of Oily, in infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, old age active, and old age infirm, concluding with a post-mortem mask, abound in the book--so do fac-similes of his

handwriting, showing the curious modifications which it underwent when he occasionally exchanged a quill for a steel-pen. But it will be more to my present purpose to announce for the benefit of unfortunate people who have not yet read the Memoirs, that Oily was, as a matter of course, a delightful and incessant talker. He poured out words, and his audience imbibed the same perpetually three times a week from tea-time to past midnight. Women especially revelled in his conversation. They hung, so to speak, palpitating on his lips. All this is told me in the Memoirs at great length, and in several places; but not a word occurs anywhere tending to show that Oily ever met with the slightest interruption on any one of the thousand occasions when he held forth. In relation to him, as in relation to the Great Glib, I seem bound to infer that he was never staggered by an unexpected question, never affronted by a black sheep among the flock, in the shape of an inattentive listener, never silenced by some careless man capable of unconsciously cutting him short and starting another topic before he had half done with his own particular subject. I am bound to believe all this--and yet, when I look about me at society as it is constituted now, I could fill a room, at a day's notice, with people who would shut up the mouth of Oily before it had been open five minutes, quite as a matter of course, and without the remotest suspicion that they were misbehaving themselves in the slightest degree. What (I ask myself), to take only one example, and that from the fair sex--what would have become of Oily's delightful and incessant talk, if he had known my friend Mrs. Marblemug, and had taken her down to dinner in his enviable capacity of distinguished man?

Mrs. Marblemug has one subject of conversation--her own vices. On all other topics she is sarcastically indifferent and scornfully mute. General conversation she consequently never indulges in; but the person who sits next to her is sure to be interrupted as soon as he attracts her attention by talking to her, by receiving a confession of her vices--not made repentantly, or confusedly, or jocularly--but slowly declaimed with an ostentatious cynicism, with a hard eye, a hard voice, a hard--no, an adamant--manner. In early youth, Mrs. Marblemug discovered that her business in life was to be eccentric and disagreeable, and she is one of the women of England who fulfils her mission.

I fancy I see the ever-flowing Oily sitting next to this lady at dinner, and innocently trying to make her hang on his lips like the rest of his tea-table harem. His conversation is reported by his affectionate biographers, as having been for the most part of the sweetly pastoral sort. I find that he drove that much-enduring subject, Nature, in his conversational car of triumph, longer and harder than most men. I see him, in my mind's eye, starting in his insinuating way from some parsley garnish round a dish of lobsters--confessing, in his rich, full, and yet low voice (vide Memoirs) that garnish delights him, because his favourite colour is green--and so getting easily on to the fields, the great subject from which he always got his largest conversational crop. I imagine his tongue to be, as it were, cutting its first preliminary capers on the

grass for the benefit of Mrs. Marblemug; and I hear that calmly-brazen lady throw him flat on his back by the utterance of some such words as these:

"Mr. Oily, I ought to have told you, perhaps, that I hate the fields: I think Nature in general something eminently disagreeable--the country, in short, quite odious. If you ask me why, I can't tell you. I know I'm wrong; but hating Nature is one of my vices."

Mr. Oily eloquently remonstrates. Mrs. Marblemug only says, "Yes, very likely--but, you see, it's one of my vices." Mr. Oily tries a dexterous compliment. Mrs. Marblemug only answers, "Don't!--I see through that. It's wrong in me to see through compliments, being a woman, I know. But I can't help seeing through them, and saying I do. That's another of my vices." Mr. Oily shifts the subject to Literature, and thence, gently but surely, to his own books--his second great topic after the fields. Mrs. Marblemug lets him go on, because she has something to finish on her plate--then lays down her knife and fork--looks at him with a kind of wondering indifference, and breaks into his next sentence thus:--

"I'm afraid I don't seem quite so much interested as I know I ought to be," she says; "but I should have told you, perhaps, when we first sat down, that I have given up reading."

"Given up reading!" exclaims Mr. Oily, thunderstruck by the monstrous confession. "You mean only the trash that has come into vogue lately; the morbid, unhealthy----"

"No, not at all," rejoins Mrs. Marblemug. "If I read anything, it would be morbid literature. My taste is unhealthy. That's another of my vices."

"My dear madam, you amaze--you alarm me,--you do indeed!" cries Mr. Oily, waving his hand in graceful deprecation and polite horror.

"Don't," says Mrs. Marblemug; "you'll knock down some of the wine-glasses, and hurt yourself. You had better keep your hand quiet,--you had, indeed. No; I have given up reading, because all books do me harm--the best--the healthiest. Your books even, I suppose, I ought to say; but I can't, because I see through compliments, and despise my own, of course, as much as other people's! Suppose, we say, I don't read, because books do me harm--and leave it there. The thing is not worth pursuing. You think it is? Well, then, books do me harm, because they increase my tendency to be envious (one of my worst vices). The better the book is, the more I hate the man for being clever enough to write it--so much cleverer than me, you know, who couldn't write it at all. I believe you call that Envy. Whatever it is, it has been one of my vices from a child. No, no wine--a little water. I think wine nasty, that's another of my vices--or, no, perhaps, that is only one of my misfortunes. Thank you. I wish I could talk to you about books; but I really can't read them--they make me so envious."

Perhaps Oily (who, as I infer from certain passages in his Memoirs, could be a sufficiently dogged and resolute man on occasions when his dignity was in danger) still valiantly declines to submit and be silent, and, shifting his ground, endeavours to draw Mrs. Marblemug out by asking her questions. The new effort, however, avails him nothing. Do what he will, he is always met and worsted by the lady in the same, quiet, easy, indifferent way; and, sooner or later, even his distinguished mouth is muzzled by Mrs. Marblemug, like the mouths of all the degenerate talkers of my own time whom I have ever seen in contact with her. Are Mr. Oily's biographers not to be depended on, or can it really be the fact that, in the course of all his long conversational career, that illustrious man never once met with a check in the shape of a Mrs. Marblemug? I have no tender prepossession in favour of the lady; but when I reflect on the character of Mr. Oily, as exhibited in his Memoirs, I am almost inclined to regret that he and Mrs. Marblemug never met. In relation to some people, I involuntarily regard her as a dose of strong moral physic; and I really think she might have done my distinguished countryman some permanent good.

To take another instance, there is the case of the once-brilliant social luminary, Mr. Endless--extinguished, unfortunately for the new generation, about the time when we were most of us only little boys and girls.

What a talker this sparkling creature must have been, if one may judge by that racy anonymous publication (racy was, I think, the word chiefly used in reviewing the book by the critics of the period), *Evenings with Endless*, by A Constant Listener! "I could hardly believe," I remember the Listener writes, "that the world was the same after Endless had flashed out of this mortal scene. It was morning while he lived--it was twilight, or worse, when he died. I was very intimate with him. Often has the hand that writes these trembling lines smacked that familiar back--often have those thrilling and matchless accents syllabled the fond diminutive of my Christian name. It was not so much that his talk was ceaseless (though that is something), as that it moved incessantly over all topics from heaven to earth. His variety of subject was the most amazing part of this amazing man. His fertility of allusion to topics of the past and present alike, was truly inexhaustible. He hopped, he skipped, he fluttered, he swooped from theme to theme. The butterfly in the garden, the bee in the flower-bed, the changes of the kaleidoscope, the sun and shower of an April morning, are but faint emblems of him." With much more to the same eloquent purpose; but not a word from the first page to the last to hint even that Endless was ever brought to a full stop, on any single occasion, by any one of the hundreds of enchanted listeners before whom he figured in his wonderful performances with the tongue from morning to night.

And yet, there must surely have been Talk-Stoppers in the world, in the time of the brilliant Endless--talk-stoppers, in all probability, possessing characteristics similar to those now displayed in society

by my exasperating connection by marriage, Mr. Spoke Wheeler.

It is impossible to say what the consequences might have been if my relative and Mr. Endless had ever come together. Mr. Spoke Wheeler is one of those men--a large class, as it appears to me--who will talk, and who have nothing whatever in the way of a subject of their own to talk about. His constant practice is to lie silently in ambush for subjects started by other people; to take them forthwith from their rightful owners; turn them coolly to his own uses; and then cunningly wait again for the next topic, belonging to somebody else, that passes within his reach. It is useless to give up, and leave him to take the lead--he invariably gives up, too, and declines the honour. It is useless to start once more, seeing him apparently silenced--he becomes talkative again the moment you offer him the chance of seizing on your new subject--disposes of it without the slightest fancy, taste, or novelty of handling, in a moment--then relapses into utter speechlessness as soon as he has silenced the rest of the company by taking their topic away from them. Wherever he goes, he commits this social atrocity with the most perfect innocence and the most provoking good humour, for he firmly believes in himself as one of the most entertaining men who ever crossed a drawing-room or caroused at a dinner-table.

Imagine Mr. Spoke Wheeler getting an invitation to one of those brilliant suppers which assisted in making the evenings of the sparkling Endless so attractive to his friends and admirers. See him sitting modestly at the table with every appearance in his face and manner of being the most persistent and reliable of listeners. Endless takes the measure of his man, as he too confidently believes, in one bright glance--thinks to himself, Here is a new worshipper to astonish; here is the conveniently dense and taciturn human pedestal on which I can stand to let off my fireworks--plunges his knife and fork, gaily hospitable, into the dish before him (let us say a turkey and truffles, for Endless is a gastronome as well as a wit), and starts off with one of those "fertile allusions," for which he was so famous.

"I never carve turkey without thinking of what Madame de Pompadour said to Louis the Fifteenth," Endless begins in his most off-hand manner. "I refer to the time when the superb Frenchwoman first came to court, and the star of the fair Chateauroux waned before her. Who remembers what the Pompadour said when the king insisted on carving the turkey?"

Before the company can beg Endless, as usual, to remember for them, Mr. Spoke Wheeler starts into life and seizes the subject.

"What a vicious state of society it was in the time of Madame de Pompadour!" he says, with moral severity. "Who can wonder that it led to the French Revolution?"

Endless feels that his first effort for the evening is nipped in the bud, and that the new guest is not to be depended on as a listener.

He, however, waits politely, and every one else waits politely to hear something more about the French Revolution. Mr. Spoke Wheeler has not another word to say. He has snatched his subject--has exhausted it--and is now waiting, with an expectant smile on his face, to lay hands on another. Disastrous silence reigns, until Mr. Endless, as host and wit, launches a new topic in despair.

"Don't forget the salad, gentlemen," he exclaims. "The emblem, as I always fancy, of human life. The sharp vinegar corrected by the soft oil, just as the misfortune of one day is compensated by the luck of another. Heigho! let moralists lecture as they will, what a true gambler's existence ours is, by the very nature of it! Love, fame, wealth, are the stakes we all play for; the world is the table; Death keeps the house, and Destiny shuffles the cards. According to my definition, gentlemen, man is a gambling animal, and woman----" Endless pauses for a moment, and lifts the glass to his lips to give himself a bacchanalian air before he amazes the company with a torrent of eloquence on the subject of woman. Unhappy man! in that one moment Mr. Spoke Wheeler seizes on his host's brilliant gambling metaphor, and runs away with it as his own property immediately.

"The worst of gambling," he says, with a look of ominous wisdom, "is, that when once a man takes to it, he can never be got to give it up again. It always ends in ruin. I know a man whose son is in the Fleet, and whose daughter is a maid-of-all-work at a lodging-house. The poor devil himself once had twenty thousand pounds, and he now picks up a living by writing begging-letters. All through gambling. Degrading vice, certainly; ruins a man's temper and health, too, as well as his property. Ah! a very degrading vice--very much so indeed!"

"I am afraid, my dear sir, you have no vices," says Endless, getting angry and sarcastic as a fresh pause follows this undeniable commonplace. "The bottle stands with you. Do you abjure even that most amiable of human failings--the cheerful glass? Ha!" exclaims Endless, seeing that his guest is going to speak again, and vainly imagining that he can cut him short this time. "Ha! what a debt we owe to the first man who discovered the true use of the grape! How drunk he must have got in making his immortal preliminary experiments! How often his wife must have begged him to consider his health and his respectability, and give up all further investigations! How he must have shocked his family with perpetual hiccups, and puzzled the medical men of the period with incurable morning headaches! To the health of that marvellous, that magnificent, that inestimable human being, the first Toper in the world! The patriarchal Bacchus quaffing in his antediluvian vineyard! What a picture, gentlemen; what a subject for our artists! Scumble, my dear friend," continues Endless, breathlessly, feeling that Mr. Spoke Wheeler has got his topic again, and anxious to secure assistance in preventing that persistent gentleman from making any use of the stolen property--"Scumble, your pencil alone is worthy of the subject. Tell us, my prince of painters, how would you treat it?"

The prince of painters has his mouth full of turkey, and looks more

puzzled than flattered by this complimentary appeal. He hesitates, and Mr. Spoke Wheeler darts into the conversation on the subject of drunkenness, forthwith.

"I'll tell you what," says the Talk-Stopper, "we may all joke about drunkenness as much as we please--I'm no saint, and I like a joke as well as anybody--but it's a deuced serious thing for all that. Seven-tenths of the crime in this country is owing to drunkenness; and of all the incurable diseases that baffle the doctors, delirium tremens is (next to hydrophobia) one of the worst. I like a cheerful glass myself--and this is uncommonly good wine we are drinking now--but there's more than you think for to be said on the temperance side of the question; there is, indeed!"

Will even the most indiscriminate of the surviving admirers of Endless, and of the great talkers generally, venture to assert that he, or they, could have shown off with the slightest approach to success in the company of Mr. Spoke Wheeler, or of Mrs. Marblemug, or of Colonel Hopkirk, or of any of the other dozens on dozens of notorious talk-stoppers whose characters I refrain from troubling the reader with? Surely not! Surely I have quoted examples enough to prove the correctness of my theory, that the days when the eminent professors of the Art of Conversation could be sure of perpetually-attentive audiences, have gone by. Instead of mourning over the loss of the great talkers, we ought to feel relieved (if we have any real regard for them, which I sometimes doubt) by their timely departure from the scene. Between the members of the modern generation who would not have listened to them, the members who could not have listened to them, and the members who would have confused, interrupted, and cut them short, what extremities of compulsory silence they must have undergone if they had lasted until our time! Our case may be lamentable enough in not having heard them; but how much worse would theirs be if they came back to the world now, and tried to show us how they won their reputations!

TISH'S SPY

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Tish, The Chronicle of Her Escapades and Excursions*, by Mary Roberts Rinehart

The adventure of the red-headed detective, the lady chauffeur, and the man who could not tell the truth

I

It is easy enough, of course, to look back on our Canadian experience and see where we went wrong. What I particularly resent is the attitude of Charlie Sands.

I am writing this for his benefit. It seems to me that a clean statement of the case is due to Tish, and, in less degree, to Aggie and myself.

It goes back long before the mysterious cipher. Even the incident of our abducting the girl in the pink tam-o'-shanter was, after all, the inevitable result of the series of occurrences that preceded it.

It is my intention to give this series of occurrences in their proper order and without bias. Herbert Spencer says that every act of one's life is the unavoidable result of every act that has preceded it.

Naturally, therefore, I begin with the engagement by Tish of a girl as chauffeur; but even before that there were contributing causes. There was the faulty rearing of the McDonald youth, for instance, and Tish's æsthetic dancing. And afterward there was Aggie's hay fever, which made her sneeze and let go of a rope at a critical moment. Indeed, Aggie's hay fever may be said to be one of the fundamental causes, being the reason we went to Canada.

It was like this: Along in June of the year before last, Aggie suddenly announced that she was going to spend the summer in Canada.

"It's the best thing in the world for hay fever," she said, avoiding Tish's eye. "Mrs. Ostermaier says she never sneezed once last year. The Northern Lights fill the air with ozone, or something like that."

"Fill the air with ozone!" Tish scoffed. "Fill Mrs. Ostermaier's skull with ozone, instead of brains, more likely!"

Tish is a good woman--a sweet woman, indeed; but she has a vein of gentle irony, which she inherited from her maternal grandfather, who was on the Supreme Bench of his country. However, that spring she was inclined to be irritable. She could not drive her car, and that was where the trouble really started.

Tish had taken up æsthetic dancing in Mareb, wearing no stays and a middy blouse and short skirt; and during a fairy dance, where she was to twirl on her right toes, keeping the three other limbs horizontal, she twisted her right lower limb severely. Though not incapacitated, she could not use it properly; and, failing one day to put on the brake quickly, she drove into an open-front butter-and-egg shop.

[This was the time one of the newspapers headed the article: "Even the Eggs Scrambled."]

When Tish decided to have a chauffeur for a time she advertised. There were plenty of replies, but all of the applicants smoked cigarettes--a habit Tish very properly deplores. The idea of securing a young woman was, I must confess, mine.

"Plenty of young women drive cars," I said, "and drive well. And, at least, they don't light a cigarette every time one stops to let a train

go by."

"Huh!" Tish commented. "And have a raft of men about all the time!"

Nevertheless, she acted on the suggestion, advertising for a young woman who could drive a car and had no followers. Hutchins answered.

She was very pretty and not over twenty; but, asked about men, her face underwent a change, almost a hardening. "You'll not be bothered with men," she said briefly. "I detest them!"

And this seemed to be the truth. Charlie Sands, for instance, for whose benefit this is being written, absolutely failed to make any impression on her. She met his overtures with cold disdain. She was also adamant to the men at the garage, succeeding in having the gasoline filtered through a chamois skin to take out the water, where Tish had for years begged for the same thing without success.

Though a dashing driver, Hutchins was careful. She sat on the small of her back and hurled us past the traffic policemen with a smile.

[Her name was really Hutchinson; but it took so long to say it at the rate she ran the car that Tish changed it to Hutchins.]

Really the whole experiment seemed to be an undoubted success, when Aggie got the notion of Canada into her head. Now, as it happened, owing to Tish's disapproval, Aggie gave up the Canada idea in favor of Nantucket, some time in June; but she had not reckoned with Tish's subconscious self. Tish was interested that spring in the subconscious self.

You may remember that, only a year or so before, it had been the fourth dimension.

[She became convinced that if one were sufficiently earnest one could go through closed doors and see into solids. In the former ambition she was unsuccessful, obtaining only bruises and disappointment; but she did develop the latter to a certain extent, for she met the laundress going out one day and, without a conscious effort, she knew that she had the best table napkins pinned to her petticoat. She accused the woman sternly--and she had six!]

"Nantucket!" said Tish. "Why Nantucket?"

"I have a niece there, and you said you hated Canada."

"On the contrary," Tish replied, with her eyes partly shut, "I find that my subconscious self has adopted and been working on the Canadian suggestion. What a wonderful thing is this buried and greater ego! Worms, rifles, fishing-rods, 'The Complete Angler,' mosquito netting, canned goods, and sleeping-bags, all in my mind and in orderly array!"

"Worms!" I said, with, I confess, a touch of scorn in my voice. "If you

will tell me, Tish Carberry--"

"Life preservers," chanted Tish's subconscious self, "rubber blankets, small tent, folding camp-beds, a camp-stove, a meat-saw, a wood-saw, and some beads and gewgaws for placating the Indians." Then she opened her eyes and took up her knitting. "There are no worms in Canada, Lizzie, just as there are no snakes in Ireland. They were all destroyed during the glacial period."

"There are plenty of worms in the United States," I said with spirit. "I dare say they could crawl over the border--unless, of course, they object to being British subjects."

She ignored me, however, and, getting up, went to one of her bureau drawers. We saw then that her subconscious self had written down lists of various things for the Canadian excursion. There was one headed Foodstuffs. Others were: Necessary Clothing: Camp Outfit; Fishing-Tackle; Weapons of Defense: and Diversions. Under this last heading it had placed binoculars, yarn and needles, life preservers, a prayer-book, and a cribbage-board.

"Boats," she said, "we can secure from the Indians, who make them, I believe, of hollow logs. And I shall rent a motor boat. Hutchins says she can manage one. When she's not doing that she can wash dishes."

[We had been rather chary of motor boats, you may remember, since the time on Lake Penzance, when something jammed on our engine, and we had gone madly round the lake a number of times, with people on various docks trying to lasso us with ropes.]

Considering that it was she who had started the whole thing, and got Tish's subconscious mind to working, Aggie was rather pettish.

"Huh!" she said. "I can't swim, and you know it, Tish. Those canoe things turn over if you so much as sneeze in them."

"You'll not sneeze," said Tish. "The Northern Lights fill the air with ozone."

Aggie looked at me helplessly; but I could do nothing. Only the year before, Tish, as you may recall, had taken us out into the Maine woods without any outfit at all, and we had lived on snared rabbits, and things that no Christian woman ought to put into her stomach. This time we were at least to go provisioned and equipped.

"Where are we going?" Aggie asked.

"Far from a white man," said Tish. "Away from milk wagons and children on velocipedes and the grocer calling up every morning for an order. We'll go to the Far North, Aggie, where the red man still treads his native forests; we'll make our camp by some lake, where the deer come at early morning to drink and fish leap to see the sunset."

Well, it sounded rather refreshing, though I confess that, until Tish mentioned it, I had always thought that fish leaped in the evening to catch mosquitoes.

We sent for Hutchins at once. She was always respectful, but never subservient. She stood in the doorway while Tish explained.

"How far north?" she said crisply. Tish told her. "We'll have no cut-and-dried destination," she said. "There's a little steamer goes up the river I have in mind. We'll get off when we see a likely place."

"Are you going for trout or bass?"

Tish was rather uncertain, but she said bass on a chance, and Hutchins nodded her approval.

"If it's bass, I'll go," she said. "I'm not fond of trout-fishing."

"We shall have a motor boat. Of course I shall not take the car."

Hutchins agreed indifferently. "Don't you worry about the motor boat," she said. "Sometimes they go, and sometimes they don't. And I'll help round the camp; but I'll not wash dishes."

"Why not?" Tish demanded.

"The reason doesn't really matter, does it? What really concerns you is the fact."

Tish stared at her; but instead of quailing before Tish's majestic eye she laughed a little.

"I've camped before," she said. "I'm very useful about a camp. I like to cook; but I won't wash dishes. I'd like, if you don't mind, to see the grocery order before it goes."

Well, Aggie likes to wash dishes if there is plenty of hot water; and Hannah, Tish's maid, refusing to go with us on account of Indians, it seemed wisest to accept Hutchins's services.

Hannah's defection was most unexpected. As soon as we reached our decision, Tish ordered beads for the Indians; and in the evenings we strung necklaces, and so on, while one of us read aloud from the works of Cooper. On the second evening thus occupied, Hannah, who is allowed to come into Tish's sitting-room in the evening and knit, suddenly burst into tears and refused to go.

"My scalp's as good to me as it is to anybody, Miss Tish," she said hysterically; and nothing would move her.

She said she would run no risk of being cooked over her own camp-fire; and from that time on she would gaze at Tish for long periods mournfully, as though she wanted to remember how she looked when she was

gone forever.

Except for Hannah, everything moved smoothly. Tish told Charlie Sands about the plan, and he was quite enthusiastic.

"Great scheme!" he said. "Eat a broiled black bass for me. And take the advice of one who knows: don't skimp on your fishing-tackle. Get the best. Go light on the canned goods, if necessary; but get the best reels and lines on the market. Nothing in life hurts so much," he said impressively, "as to get a three-pound bass to the top of the water and have your line break. I've had a big fellow get away like that and chase me a mile with its thumb on its nose." This last, of course, was purely figurative.

He went away whistling. I wish he had been less optimistic. When we came back and told him the whole story, and he sat with his mouth open and his hair, as he said, crackling at the roots, I reminded him with some bitterness that he had encouraged us. His only retort was to say that the excursion itself had been harmless enough; but that if three elderly ladies, church members in good standing, chose to become freebooters and pirates the moment they got away from a corner policeman, they need not blame him.

The last thing he said that day in June was about fishing-worms.

"Take 'em with you," he said. "They charge a cent apiece for them up there, assorted colors, and there's something stolid and British about a Canadian worm. The fish aren't crazy about 'em. On the other hand, our worms here are--er--vivacious, animated. I've seen a really brisk and on-to-its-job United States worm reach out and clutch a bass by the gills."

I believe it was the next day that Tish went to the library and read about worms. Aggie and I had spent the day buying tackle, according to Charlie Sands's advice. We got some very good rods with nickel-plated reels for two dollars and a quarter, a dozen assorted hooks for each person, and a dozen sinkers. The man wanted to sell us what he called a "landing net," but I took a good look at it and pinched Aggie.

"I can make one out of a barrel hoop and mosquito netting," I whispered; so we did not buy it.

Perhaps he thought we were novices, for he insisted on showing us all sorts of absurd things--trolling-hooks, he called them; gaff hooks for landing big fish and a spoon that was certainly no spoon and did not fool us for a minute, being only a few hooks and a red feather. He asked a dollar and a quarter for it!

[I made one that night at home, using a bit of red feather from a duster. It cost me just three cents. Of that, as of Hutchins, more later.]

Aggie, whose idea of Canada had been the Hotel Frontenac, had grown

rather depressed as our preparations proceeded. She insisted that night on recalling the fact that Mr. Wiggins had been almost drowned in Canada.

"He went with the Roof and Gutter Club, Lizzie," she said, "and he was a beautiful swimmer; but the water comes from the North Pole, freezing cold, and the first thing he knew--"

The telephone bell rang just then. It was Tish.

"I've just come from the library, Lizzie," she said. "We'd better raise the worms. We've got a month to do it in. Hutchins and I will be round with the car at eight o'clock to-night. Night is the time to get them."

She refused to go into details, but asked us to have an electric flash or two ready and a couple of wooden pails. Also she said to wear mackintoshes and rubbers. Just before she rang off, she asked me to see that there was a package of oatmeal on hand, but did not explain. When I told Aggie she eyed me miserably.

"I wish she'd be either more explicit or less," she said. "We'll be arrested again. I know it!"

[Now and then Tish's enthusiasms have brought us into collision with the law--not that Tish has not every respect for law and order, but that she is apt to be hasty and at times almost unconventional.]

"You remember," said Aggie, "that time she tried to shoot the sheriff, thinking he was a train robber? She started just like this--reading up about walking-tours, and all that. I--I'm nervous, Lizzie."

I was staying with Aggie for a few days while my apartment was being papered. To soothe Aggie's nerves I read aloud from Gibbon's "Rome" until dinner-time, and she grew gradually calmer.

"After all, Lizzie," she said, "she can't get us into mischief with two wooden pails and a package of oatmeal."

Tish and Hutchins came promptly at eight and we got into the car. Tish wore the intent and dreamy look that always preceded her enterprises. There was a tin sprinkling-can, quite new, in the tonneau, and we placed our wooden pails beside it and the oatmeal in it. I confess I was curious, but to my inquiries Tish made only one reply:--

"Worms!"

Now I do not like worms. I do not like to touch them. I do not even like to look at them. As the machine went along I began to have a creepy loathing of them. Aggie must have been feeling the same way, for when my hand touched hers she squealed.

Over her shoulder Tish told her plan. She said it was easy to get fishing-worms at night and that Hutchins knew of a place a few miles out

of town where the family was away and where there would be plenty.

"We'll put them in boxes of earth," she said, "and feed them coffee or tea grounds one day and oatmeal water the next. They propagate rapidly. We'll have a million to take with us. If we only have a hundred thousand at a cent apiece, that's a clear saving of a thousand dollars."

"We could sell some," I suggested sarcastically; for Tish's enthusiasms have a way of going wrong.

But she took me seriously. "If there are any fishing clubs about," she said, "I dare say they'll buy them; and we can turn the money over to Mr. Ostermaier for the new organ."

Tish had bought the organ and had an evening concert with it before we turned off the main road into a private drive.

"This is the place," Hutchins said laconically.

Tish got out and took a survey. There was shrubbery all round and a very large house, quite dark, in the foreground.

"Drive onto the lawn, Hutchins," she said. "When the worms come up, the lamps will dazzle them and they'll be easy to capture."

We bumped over a gutter and came to a stop in the middle of the lawn.

"It would be better if it was raining," Tish said. "You know, yourself, Lizzie, how they come up during a gentle rain. Give me the sprinkling-can."

I do not wish to lay undue blame on Hutchins, who was young; but it was she who suggested that there would probably be a garden hose somewhere and that it would save time. I know she went with Tish round the corner of the house, and that they returned in ten minutes or so, dragging a hose.

"I broke a tool-house window," Tish observed, "but I left fifty cents on the sill to replace it. It's attached at the other end. Run back, Hutchins, and turn on the water; but not too much. We needn't drown the little creatures."

Well, I have never seen anything work better. Aggie, who had refused to put a foot out of the car, stood up in it and held the hose. As fast as she wet a bit of lawn, we followed with the pails. I spread my mackintosh out and knelt on it.

[Illustration: As fast as she wet a bit of lawn, we followed with the pails]

The thing took skill. The worms had a way of snapping back into their holes like lightning.

Tish got about three to my one, and talked about packing them in moss and ice, and feeding them every other day. Hutchins, however, stood on the lawn, with her hands in her pockets, and watched the house.

Suddenly, without warning, Aggie turned the hose directly on my left ear and held it there.

"There's somebody coming!" she cried. "Merciful Heavens, what'll I do with the hose?"

"You can turn it away from me!" I snapped.

So she did, and at that instant a young man emerged from the shrubbery.

He did not speak at once. Probably he could not. I happened to look at Hutchins, and, for all her usual *savoir-faire*, as Charlie Sands called it, she was clearly uncomfortable.

Tish, engaged in a struggle at that moment and sitting back like a robin, did not see him at once.

"Well!" said the young man; and again: "Well, upon my word!"

He seemed out of breath with surprise; and he took off his hat and mopped his head with a handkerchief. And, of course, as though things were not already bad enough, Aggie sneezed at that instant, as she always does when she is excited; and for just a second the hose was on him.

It was unexpected and he almost staggered. He looked at all of us, including Hutchins, and ran his handkerchief round inside his collar. Then he found his voice.

"Really," he said, "this is awfully good of you. We do need rain--don't we?"

Tish was on her feet by that time, but she could not think of anything to say.

"I'm sorry if I startled you," said the young man. "I--I'm a bit startled myself."

"There is nothing to make a fuss about!" said Hutchins crisply. "We are getting worms to go fishing."

"I see," said the young man. "Quite natural, I'm sure. And where are you going fishing?"

Hutchins surprised us all by rudely turning her back on him. Considering we were on his property and had turned his own hose on him, a little tact would have been better.

Tish had found her voice by that time. "We broke a window in the

tool-house," she said; "but I put fifty cents on the sill."

"Thank you," said the young man.

Hutchins wheeled at that and stared at him in the most disagreeable fashion; but he ignored her.

"We are trespassing," said Tish; "but I hope you understand. We thought the family was away."

"I just happened to be passing through," he explained. "I'm awfully attached to the place--for various reasons. Whenever I'm in town I spend my evenings wandering through the shrubbery and remembering--er--happier days."

"I think the lamps are going out," said Hutchins sharply. "If we're to get back to town--"

"Ah!" he broke in. "So you have come out from the city?"

"Surely," said Hutchins to Tish, "it is unnecessary to give this gentleman any information about ourselves! We have done no damage--"

"Except the window," he said.

"We've paid for that," she said in a nasty tone; and to Tish: "How do we know this place is his? He's probably some newspaper man, and if you tell him who you are this whole thing will be in the morning paper, like the eggs."

"I give you my word of honor," he said, "that I am nothing of the sort; in fact, if you will give me a little time I'd--I'd like to tell all about myself. I've got a lot to say that's highly interesting, if you'll only listen."

Hutchins, however, only gave him a cold glance of suspicion and put the pails in the car. Then she got in and sat down.

"I take it," he said to her, "that you decline either to give or to receive any information."

"Absolutely!"

He sighed then, Aggie declares.

"Of course," he said, "though I haven't really the slightest curiosity, I could easily find out, you know. Your license plates--"

"Are under the cushion I'm sitting on," said Hutchins, and started the engine.

"Really, Hutchins," said Tish, "I don't see any reason for being so suspicious. I have always believed in human nature and seldom have I

been disappointed. The young man has done nothing to justify rudeness. And since we are trespassing on his place--"

"Huh!" was all Hutchins said.

The young man sauntered over to the car, with his hands thrust into this coat pockets. He was nice-looking, especially then, when he was smiling.

"Hutchins!" he said. "Well, that's a clue anyhow. It--it's an uncommon name. You didn't happen to notice a large 'No-Trespassing!' sign by the gate, did you?"

Hutchins only looked ahead and ignored him. As Tish said afterward, we had a good many worms, anyhow; and, as the young man and Hutchins had clearly taken an awful dislike to each other at first sight, the best way to avoid trouble was to go home. So she got into the car. The young man helped her and took off his hat.

"Come out any time you like," he said affably. "I'm not here at all in the daytime, and the grounds are really rather nice. Come out and get some roses. We've some pretty good ones--English importations. If you care to bring some children from the tenements out for a picnic, please feel free to do it. We're not selfish."

Hutchins rudely started the car before he had finished; but he ignored her and waved a cordial farewell to the rest of us.

"Bring as many as you like," he called. "Sunday is a good day. Ask Miss--Miss Hutchins to come out and bring some friends along."

We drove back at the most furious rate. Tish was at last compelled to remonstrate with Hutchins.

"Not only are we going too fast," she said, "but you were really rude to that nice young man."

"I wish I had turned the hose on him and drowned him!" said Hutchins between her teeth.

II

Hutchins brought a newspaper to Tish the next morning at breakfast, and Tish afterwards said her expression was positively malevolent in such a young and pretty woman.

The newspaper said that an attempt had been made to rob the Newcomb place the night before, but that the thieves had apparently secured nothing but a package of oatmeal and a tin sprinkling-can, which they had abandoned on the lawn. Some color, however, was lent to the fear

that they had secured an amount of money, from the fact that a silver half-dollar had been found on the window sill of a tool-house. The Newcomb family was at its summer home on the Maine coast.

"You see," Hutchins said to Tish, "that man didn't belong there at all. He was just impertinent and--laughing in his sleeve."

Tish was really awfully put out, having planned to take the Sunday school there for a picnic. She was much pleased, however, at Hutchins's astuteness.

"I shall take her along to Canada," she said to me. "The girl has instinct, which is better than reason. Her subconsciousness is unusually active."

Looking back, as I must, and knowing now all that was in her small head while she whistled about the car, or all that was behind her smile, one wonders if women really should have the vote. So many of them are creatures of sex and guile. A word from her would have cleared up so much, and she never spoke it!

Well, we spent most of July in getting ready to go. Charlie Sands said the mosquitoes and black flies would be gone by August, and we were in no hurry.

We bought a good tent, with a diagram of how to put it up, some folding camp-beds, and a stove. The day we bought the tent we had rather a shock, for as we left the shop the suburban youth passed us. We ignored him completely, but he lifted his hat. Hutchins, who was waiting in Tish's car, saw him, too, and went quite white with fury.

Shortly after that, Hannah came in one night and said that a man was watching Tish's windows. We thought it was imagination, and Tish gave her a dose of sulphur and molasses--her liver being sluggish.

"Probably an Indian, I dare say," was Tish's caustic comment.

In view of later developments, however, it is a pity we did not investigate Hannah's story; for Aggie, going home from Tish's late one night in Tish's car, had a similar experience, declaring that a small machine had followed them, driven by a heavy-set man with a mustache. She said, too, that Hutchins, swerving sharply, had struck the smaller machine a glancing blow and almost upset it.

It was about the middle of July, I believe, that Tish received the following letter:--

Madam: Learning that you have decided to take a fishing-trip in Canada, I venture to offer my services as guide, philosopher, and friend. I know Canada thoroughly; can locate bass, as nearly as it lies in a mortal so to do; can manage a motor launch; am thoroughly at home in a canoe; can shoot, swim, and cook--the last indifferently well; know the Indian mind and my own--and will carry water and chop

wood.

I do not drink, and such smoking as I do will, if I am engaged, be done in the solitude of the woods.

I am young and of a cheerful disposition. My object is not money, but only expenses paid and a chance to forget a recent and still poignant grief. I hope you will see the necessity for such an addition to your party, and allow me to subscribe myself, madam,

Your most obedient servant,

J. UPDIKE.

Tish was much impressed; but Hutchins, in whose judgment she began to have the greatest confidence, opposed the idea.

"I wouldn't think of it," she said briefly.

"Why? It's a frank, straightforward letter."

"He likes himself too much. And you should always be suspicious of anything that's offered too cheap."

So the Updike application was refused. I have often wondered since what would have been the result had we accepted it!

The worms were doing well, though Tish found that Hannah neglected them, and was compelled to feed them herself. On the day before we started, we packed them carefully in ice and moss, and fed them. That was the day the European war was declared.

"Canada is at war," Tish telephoned. "The papers say the whole country is full of spies, blowing up bridges and railroads."

"We can still go to the seashore," I said. "The bead things will do for the missionary box to Africa."

"Seashore nothing!" Tish retorted. "We're going, of course,--just as we planned. We'll keep our eyes open; that's all. I'm not for one side or the other, but a spy's a spy."

Later that evening she called again to say there were rumors that the Canadian forests were bristling with German wireless outfits.

"I've a notion to write J. Updike, Lizzie, and find out whether he knows anything about wireless telegraphy," she said, "only there's so little time. Perhaps I can find a book that gives the code."

[This is only pertinent as showing Tish's state of mind. As a matter of fact, she did not write to Updike at all.]

Well, we started at last, and I must say they let us over the border with a glance; but they asked us whether we had any firearms. Tish's trunk contained a shotgun and a revolver; but she had packed over the top her most intimate personal belongings, and they were not disturbed.

"Have you any weapons?" asked the inspector.

"Do we look like persons carrying weapons?" Tish demanded haughtily. And of course we did not. Still, there was an untruth of the spirit and none of us felt any too comfortable. Indeed, what followed may have been a punishment on us for deceit and conspiracy.

Aggie had taken her cat along--because it was so fond of fish, she said. And, between Tish buying ice for the worms and Aggie getting milk for the cat, the journey was not monotonous; but on returning from one of her excursions to the baggage-car, Tish put a heavy hand on my shoulder.

"That boy's on the train, Lizzie!" she said. "He had the impudence to ask me whether I still drive with the license plates under a cushion. English roses--importations!" said Tish, and sniffed. "You don't suppose he went into that tent shop and asked about us?"

"He might," I retorted; "but, on the other hand, there's no reason why our going to Canada should keep the rest of the United States at home!"

However, the thing did seem queer, somehow. Why had he told us things that were not so? Why had he been so anxious to know who we were? Why, had he asked us to take the Sunday-school picnic to a place that did not belong to him?

"He may be going away to forget some trouble. You remember what he said about happier days," said Tish.

"That was Updike's reason too," I relied. "Poignant grief!"

For just a moment our eyes met. The same suspicion had occurred to us both. Well, we agreed to say nothing to Aggie or Hutchins, for fear of upsetting them, and the next hour or so was peaceful.

Hutchins read and Aggie slept. Tish and I strung beads for the Indians, and watched the door into the next car. And, sure enough, about the middle of the afternoon he appeared and stared in at us. He watched us for quite a time, smoking a cigarette as he did so. Then he came in and bent down over Tish.

"You didn't take the children out for the picnic, did you?" he said.

"I did not!" Tish snapped.

"I'm sorry. Never saw the place look so well!"

"Look here," Tish said, putting down her beads; "what were you doing there that night anyhow? You don't belong to the family."

He looked surprised and then grieved.

"You've discovered that, have you?" he said. "I did, you know--word of honor! They've turned me off; but I love the old place still, and on summer nights I wander about it, recalling happier days."

Hutchins closed her book with a snap, and he sighed.

"I perceive that we are overheard," he said. "Some time I hope to tell you the whole story. It's extremely sad. I'll not spoil the beginning of your holiday with it."

All the time he had been talking he held a piece of paper in his hand. When he left us Tish went back thoughtfully to her beads.

"It just shows, Lizzie," she said, "how wrong we are to trust to appearances. That poor boy--"

I had stooped into the aisle and was picking up the piece of paper which he had accidentally dropped as he passed Hutchins. I opened it and read aloud to Tish and Aggie, who had wakened:--

"'Afraid you'll not get away with it! The red-haired man in the car behind is a plain-clothes man.'"

Tish has a large fund of general knowledge, gained through Charlie Sands; so what Aggie and I failed to understand she interpreted at once.

"A plain-clothes man," she explained, "is a detective dressed as a gentleman. It's as plain as pikestaff! The boy's received this warning and dropped it. He has done something he shouldn't and is escaping to Canada!"

I do not believe, however, that we should have thought of his being a political spy but for the conductor of the train. He proved to be a very nice person, with eight children and a toupee; and he said that Canada was honeycombed with spies in the pay of the German Government.

"They're sending wireless messages all the time, probably from remote places," he said. "And, of course, their play now is to blow up the transcontinental railroads. Of course the railroads have an army of detectives on the watch."

"Good Heavens!" Aggie said, and turned pale.

Well, our pleasure in the journey was ruined. Every time the whistle blew on the engine we quailed, and Tish wrote her will then and there on the back of an envelope. It was while she was writing that the truth came to her.

"That boy!" she said. "Don't you see it all? That note was a warning to him. He's a spy and the red-haired man is after him."

None of us slept that night though Tish did a very courageous thing about eleven o'clock, when she was ready for bed. I went with her. We had put our dressing-gowns over our nightrobes, and we went back to the car containing the spy.

He had not retired, but was sitting alone, staring ahead moodily. The red-haired man was getting ready for bed, just opposite. Tish spoke loudly, so the detective should hear.

"I have come back," Tish said, "to say that we know everything. A word to the wise, Mister Happier Days! Don't try any of your tricks!"

He sat, with his mouth quite open, and stared at us: but the red-haired man pretended to hear nothing and took off his other shoe.

None of us slept at all except Hutchins. Though we had told her nothing, she seemed inherently to distrust the spy. When, on arriving at the town where we were to take the boat, he offered to help her off with Aggie's cat basket, which she was carrying, she snubbed him.

"I can do it myself," she said coldly; "and if you know when you're well off you'll go back to where you came from. Something might happen to you here in the wilderness."

"I wish it would," he replied in quite a tragic manner.

[As Tish said then, a man is probably often forced by circumstances into hateful situations. No spy can really want to be a spy with every brick wall suggesting, as it must, a firing-squad.]

Well, to make a long story short, we took the little steamer that goes up the river three times a week to take groceries and mail to the logging-camps, and the spy and the red-haired detective went along. The spy seemed to have quite a lot of luggage, but the detective had only a suitcase.

Tish, watching the detective, said his expression grew more and more anxious as we proceeded up the river. Cottages gave place to logging-camps and these to rocky islands, with no sign of life; still, the spy stayed on the steamer, and so, of course, did the detective.

Tish went down and examined the luggage. She reported that the spy was traveling under the name of McDonald and that the detective's suitcase was unmarked. Mr. McDonald had some boxes and a green canoe. The detective had nothing at all. There were no other passengers.

We let Aggie's cat out on the boat and he caught a mouse almost immediately, and laid it in the most touching manner at the detective's feet; but he was in a very bad humor and flung it over the rail. Shortly after that he asked Tish whether she intended to go to the Arctic Circle.

"I don't know that that's any concern of yours," Tish said. "You're not after me, you know."

He looked startled and muttered something into his mustache.

"It's perfectly clear what's wrong with him," Tish said. "He's got to stick to Mr. McDonald, and he hasn't got a tent in that suitcase, or even a blanket. I don't suppose he knows where his next meal's coming from."

She was probably right, for I saw the crew of the boat packing a box or two of crackers and an old comfort into a box; and Aggie overheard the detective say to the captain that if he would sell him some fishhooks he would not starve anyhow.

Tish found an island that suited her about three o'clock that afternoon, and we disembarked. Mr. McDonald insisted on helping the crew with our stuff, which they piled on a large flat rock; but the detective stood on the upper deck and scowled down at us. Tish suggested that he was a woman-hater.

"They know so many lawbreaking women," she said, "it's quite natural."

Having landed us, the boat went across to another island and deposited Mr. McDonald and the green canoe. Tish, who had talked about a lodge in some vast wilderness, complained at that; but when the detective got off on a little tongue of the mainland, in sight of both islands, she said the place was getting crowded and she had a notion to go farther.

The first thing she did was to sit on a box and open a map. The Canadian Pacific was only a few miles away through the woods!

Hutchins proved herself a treasure. She could work all round the three of us; she opened boxes and a can of beans for supper with the same hatchet, and had tea made and the beans heated while Tish was selecting a site for the tent.

But--and I remembered this later--she watched the river at intervals, with her cheeks like roses from the exertion. She was really a pretty girl--only, when no one was looking, her mouth that day had a way of setting itself firmly, and she frowned at the water.

We, Hutchins and I, set up the stove against a large rock, and when the teakettle started to boil it gave the river front a homey look. Sitting on my folding-chair beside the stove, with a cup of tea in my hand and a plate of beans on a doily on a packing-box beside me, I was entirely comfortable. Through the glasses I could see the red-haired man on the other shore sitting on a rock, with his head in his hands; but Mr. McDonald had clearly located on the other side of his island and was not in sight.

Aggie and Tish were putting up the tent, and Hutchins was feeding the tea grounds to the worms, which had traveled comfortably, when I saw a

canoe coming up the river. I called to Tish about it.

"An Indian!" she said calmly. "Get the beads, Aggie; and put my shotgun on that rock, where he can see it." She stood and watched him.

"Primitive man, every inch of him!" she went on. "Notice his uncovered head. Notice the freedom, almost the savagery, of the way he uses that paddle. I wish he would sing. You remember, in Hiawatha, how they sing as they paddle along?"

She got the beads and went to the water's edge; but the Indian stooped just then and, picking up a Panama hat, put it on his head.

"I have called," he said, "to see whether I can interest you in a set of books I am selling. I shall detain you only a moment. Sixty-three steel engravings by well-known artists; best hand-made paper; and the work itself is of high educational value."

Tish suddenly put the beads behind her back and said we did not expect to have any time to read. We had come into the wilderness to rest our minds.

"You are wrong, I fear," said the Indian. "Personally I find that I can read better in the wilds than anywhere else. Great thoughts in great surroundings! I take Nietzsche with me when I go fishing."

Tish had the wretched beads behind her all the time; and, to make conversation, more than anything else, she asked about venison. He shrugged his shoulders. J. Fenimore Cooper had not prepared us for an Indian who shrugged his shoulders.

"We Indians are allowed to kill deer," he said; "but I fear you are prohibited. I am not even permitted to sell it."

"I should think," said Tish sharply, "that, since we are miles from a game warden, you could safely sell us a steak or two."

He gazed at her disapprovingly. "I should not care to break the law, madam," he said.

Then he picked up his paddle and took himself and his scruples and his hand-made paper and his sixty-three steel engravings down the river.

"Primitive man!" I said to Tish, from my chair. "Notice the freedom, almost the savagery, with which he swings that paddle."

We had brought a volume of Cooper along, not so much to read as to remind us how to address the Indians. Tish said nothing, but she got the book and flung it far out into the river.

There were a number of small annoyances the first day or two. Hutchins was having trouble with the motor launch, which the steamer had towed up the day we came, and which she called the "Mebbe." And another civilized Indian, with a gold watch and a cigarette case, had rented us a leaky

canoe for a dollar a day.

[We patched the leak with chewing gum, which Aggie always carried for indigestion; and it did fairly well, so long as the gum lasted.]

Then, on the second night, there was a little wind, and the tent collapsed on us, the ridgepole taking Aggie across the chest. It was that same night, I think, when Aggie's cat found a porcupine in the woods, and came in looking like a pincushion.

What with chopping firewood for the stove, and carrying water, and bailing out the canoe, and with the motor boat giving one gasp and then dying for every hundred times somebody turned over the engine, we had no time to fish for two days.

The police agent fished all day from a rock, for, of course, he had no boat; but he seemed to catch nothing. At times we saw him digging frantically, as though for worms. What he dug with I do not know; but, of course, he got no worms. Tish said if he had been more civil she would have taken something to him and a can of worms; but he had been rude, especially to Aggie's cat, and probably the boat would bring him things.

What with getting settled and everything, we had not much time to think about the spy. It was on the third day, I believe, that he brought his green canoe to the open water in front of us and anchored there, just beyond earshot.

He put out a line and opened a book; and from that time on he was a part of the landscape every day from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. At noon he would eat some sort of a lunch, reading as he ate.

He apparently never looked toward us, but he was always there. It was the most extraordinary thing. At first we thought he had found a remarkable fishing-place; but he seemed to catch very few fish. It was Tish, I think, who found the best explanation.

"He's providing himself with an alibi," she stated. "How can he be a spy when we see him all day long? Don't you see how clever it is?"

It was the more annoying because we had arranged a small cove for soap-and-water bathing, hanging up a rod for bath-towels and suspending a soap-dish and a sponge-holder from an overhanging branch. The cove was well shielded by brush and rocks from the island, but naturally was open to the river.

It was directly opposite this cove that Mr. McDonald took up his position.

This compelled us to bathe in the early morning, while the water was still cold, and resulted in causing Aggie a most uncomfortable half-hour on the fourth morning of our stay.

She was the last one in the pool, and Tish absent-mindedly took her bathrobe and slippers back to the camp when she went. Tish went out in the canoe shortly after. She was learning to use one, with a life preserver on--Tish, of course, not the canoe. And Mr. McDonald arriving soon after, Aggie was compelled to sit in the water for two hours and twenty minutes. When Hutchins found her she was quite blue.

This was the only disagreement we had all summer: Aggie's refusing to speak to Tish that entire day. She said Mr. McDonald had seen her head and thought it was some sort of swimming animal, and had shot at her.

Mr. McDonald said afterward he knew her all the time, and was uncertain whether she was taking a cure for something or was trying to commit suicide. He said he spent a wretched morning. At five o'clock that evening we began to hear a curious tapping noise from the spy's island. It would last for a time, stop, and go on.

Hutchins said it was woodpeckers; but Tish looked at me significantly.

"Wireless!" she said. "What did I tell you?"

That decided her next move, for that evening she put some tea and canned corn and a rubber blanket into the canoe; and in fear and trembling I went with her.

"It's going to rain, Lizzie," she said, "and after all, that detective may be surly; but he's doing his duty by his country. It's just as heroic to follow a spy up here, and starve to death watching him, as it is to storm a trench--and less showy. And I've something to tell him."

The canoe tilted just then, and only by heroic effort, were we able to calm it.

"Then why not go comfortably in the motor boat?"

Tish stopped, her paddle in the air. "Because I can't make that dratted engine go," she said, "and because I believe Hutchins would drown us all before she'd take any help to him. It's my belief that she's known him somewhere. I've seen her sit on a rock and look across at him with murder in her eyes."

A little wind had come up, and the wretched canoe was leaking, the chewing gum having come out. Tish was paddling; so I was compelled to sit over the aperture, thus preventing water from coming in. Despite my best efforts, however, about three inches seeped in and washed about me. It was quite uncomfortable.

The red-haired man was asleep when we landed. He had hung the comfort over a branch, like a tent, and built a fire at the end of it. He had his overcoat on, buttoned to the chin, and his head was on his suit-case. He sat up and looked at us, blinking.

"We've brought you some tea and some canned corn," Tish said; "and a

rubber blanket. It's going to rain."

He slid out of the tent, feet first, and got up; but when he tried to speak he sneezed. He had a terrible cold.

"I might as well say at once," Tish went on, "that we know why you are here--"

"The deuce you do!" he said hoarsely.

"We do not particularly care about you, especially since the way you acted to a friendly and innocent cat--one can always judge a man by the way he treats dumb animals; but we sympathize with your errand. We'll even help if we can."

"Then the--the person in question has confided in you?"

"Not at all," said Tish loftily. "I hope we can put two and two together. Have you got a revolver?"

He looked startled at that. "I have one," he said; "but I guess I'll not need it. The first night or two a skunk hung round; two, in fact--mother and child--but I think they're gone."

"Would you like some fish?"

"My God, no!"

This is a truthful narrative. That is exactly what he said.

"I'll tell you what I do need, ladies," he went on: "If you've got a spare suit of underwear over there, I could use it. It'd stretch, probably. And I'd like a pen and some ink. I must have lost my fountain pen out of my pocket stooping over the bank to wash my face."

"Do you know the wireless code?" Tish asked suddenly.

"Wireless?"

"I have every reason to believe," she said impressively, "that one of the great trees on that island conceals a wireless outfit."

"I see!" He edged back a little from us both.

"I should think," Tish said, eyeing him, "that a knowledge of the wireless code would be essential to you in your occupation."

"We--we get a smattering of all sorts of things," he said; but he was uneasy--you could see that with half an eye.

He accompanied us down to the canoe; but once, when Tish turned suddenly, he ducked back as though he had been struck and changed color. He thanked us for the tea and corn, and said he wished we had a spare

razor--but, of course, he supposed not. Then:--

"I suppose the--the person in question will stay as long as you do?" he asked, rather nervously.

"It looks like it," said Tish grimly. "I've no intention of being driven away, if that's what you mean. We'll stay as long as the fishing's good."

He groaned under his breath. "The whole d--d river is full of fish," he said. "They crawled up the bank last night and ate all the crackers I'd saved for to-day. Oh, I'll pay somebody out for this, all right! Good gracious, ladies, your boat's full of water!"

"It has a hole in it," Tish replied and upturned it to empty it.

When he saw the hole his eyes stuck out. "You can't go out in that leaky canoe! It's suicidal!"

"Not at all," Tish assured him. "My friend here will sit on the leak. Get in quick, Lizzie. It's filling."

The last we saw of the detective that night he was standing on the bank, staring after us. Afterward, when a good many things were cleared up, he said he decided that he'd been asleep and dreamed the whole thing--the wireless, and my sitting on the hole in the canoe, and the wind tossing it about, and everything--only, of course, there was the tea and the canned corn!

We did our first fishing the next day. Hutchins had got the motor boat going, and I put over the spoon I had made from the feather duster. After going a mile or so slowly I felt a tug, and on drawing my line in I found I had captured a large fish. I wrapped the line about a part of the engine and Tish put the barrel hoop with the netting underneath it. The fish was really quite large--about four feet, I think--and it broke through the netting. I wished to hit it with the oar, but Hutchins said that might break the fin and free it. Unluckily we had not brought Tish's gun, or we might have shot it.

At last we turned the boat round and went home, the fish swimming alongside, with its mouth open. And there Aggie, who is occasionally almost inspired, landed the fish by the simple expedient of getting out of the boat, taking the line up a bank and wrapping it round a tree. By all pulling together we landed the fish successfully. It was forty-nine inches by Tish's tape measure.

Tish did not sleep well that night. She dreamed that the fish had a red mustache and was a spy in disguise. When she woke she declared there was somebody prowling round the tent.

She got her shotgun and we all sat up in bed for an hour or so.

Nothing happened, however, except that Aggie cried out that there was a

small animal just inside the door of the tent. We could see it, too, though faintly. Tish turned the shotgun on it and it disappeared; but the next morning she found she had shot one of her shoes to pieces.

III

It was the day Tish began her diary that we discovered the red-haired man's signal. Tish was compelled to remain at home most of the day, breaking in another pair of shoes, and she amused herself by watching the river and writing down interesting things. She had read somewhere of the value of such records of impressions:--

10 A.M. Gull on rock. Very pretty. Frightened away by the McDonald person, who has just taken up his customary position. Is he reading or watching this camp?

10.22. Detective is breakfasting--through glasses, he is eating canned corn. Aggie--pickerel, from bank.

10.40. Aggie's cat, beside her, has caught a small fish. Aggie declares that the cat stole one of her worms and held it in the water. I think she is mistaken.

11. Most extraordinary thing--Hutchins has asked permission to take pen and ink across to the detective! Have consented.

11.20. Hutchins is still across the river. If I did not know differently I should say she and the detective are quarreling. He is whittling something. Through glasses, she appears to stamp her foot.

11.30. Aggie has captured a small sunfish. Hutchins is still across the river. He seems to be appealing to her for something--possibly the underwear. We have none to spare.

11.40. Hutchins is an extraordinary girl. She hates men, evidently. She has had some sort of quarrel with the detective and has returned flushed with battle. Mr. McDonald called to her as she passed, but she ignored him.

12, noon. Really, there is something mysterious about all this. The detective was evidently whittling a flagpole. He has erected it now, with a red silk handkerchief at end. It hangs out over the water. Aggie--bass, but under legal size.

1.15 P.M. The flag puzzles Hutchins. She is covertly watching it. It is evidently a signal--but to whom? Are the secret-service men closing in on McDonald?

1. Aggie--pike!

2. On consulting map find unnamed lake only a few miles away. Shall investigate to-morrow.

3. Steamer has just gone. Detective now has canoe, blue in color. Also food. He sent off his letter.

4. Fed worms. Lizzie thinks they know me. How kindness is its own reward! Mr. McDonald is drawing in his anchor, which is a large stone fastened to a rope. Shall take bath.

Tish's notes ended here. She did not take the bath after all, for Mr. McDonald made us a call that afternoon.

He beached the green canoe and came up the rocks calmly and smilingly. Hutchins gave him a cold glance and went on with what she was doing, which was chopping a plank to cook the fish on. He bowed cheerfully to all of us and laid a string of fish on a rock.

"I brought a little offering," he said, looking at Hutchins's back. "The fishing isn't what I expected but if the young lady with the hatchet will desist, so I can make myself heard, I've found a place where there are fish! This biggest fellow is three and a quarter pounds."

Hutchins chopped harder than ever, and the plank flew up, striking her in the chest; but she refused all assistance, especially from Mr. McDonald, who was really concerned. He hurried to her and took the hatchet out of her hand, but in his excitement he was almost uncivil.

"You obstinate little idiot!" he said. "You'll kill yourself yet."

To my surprise, Hutchins, who had been entirely unemotional right along, suddenly burst into tears and went into the tent. Mr. McDonald took a hasty step or two after her, realizing, no doubt, that he had said more than he should to a complete stranger; but she closed the fly of the tent quite viciously and left him standing, with his arms folded, staring at it.

It was at that moment he saw the large fish, hanging from a tree. He stood for a moment staring at it and we could see that he was quite surprised.

"It is a fish, isn't it?" he said after a moment. "I--I thought for a moment it was painted on something."

He sat down suddenly on one of our folding-chairs and looked at the fish, and then at each of us in turn.

"You know," he said, "I didn't think there were such fish! I--you mustn't mind my surprise." He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. "Just kick those things I brought into the river, will you? I apologize for them."

"Forty-nine inches," Tish said. "We expect to do better when we really get started. This evening we shall go after its mate, which is probably hanging round."

"Its mate?" he said, rather dazed. "Oh, I see. Of course!"

He still seemed to doubt his senses, for he went over and touched it with his finger. "Ladies," he said, "I'm not going after the--the mate. I couldn't land it if I did get it. I am going to retire from the game--except for food; but I wish, for the sake of my reason, you'd tell me what you caught it with."

Well, you may heartily distrust a person; but that is no reason why you should not answer a simple question. So I showed him the thing I had made--and he did not believe me!

"You're perfectly right," he said. "Every game has its secrets. I had no business to ask. But you haven't caught me with that feather-duster thing any more than you caught that fish with it. I don't mind your not telling me. That's your privilege. But isn't it rather rubbing it in to make fun of me?"

"Nothing of the sort!" Aggie said angrily. "If you had caught it--"

"My dear lady," he said, "I couldn't have caught it. The mere shock of getting such a bite would have sent me out of my boat in a swoon." He turned to Tish. "I have only one disappointment," he said, "that it wasn't one of our worms that did the work."

Tish said afterward she was positively sorry for him, he looked so crestfallen. So, when he started for his canoe she followed him.

"Look here," she said; "you're young, and I don't want to see you get into trouble. Go home, young man! There are plenty of others to take your place."

He looked rather startled. "That's it exactly," he said, after a moment. "As well as I can make out there are about a hundred. If you think," he said fiercely, raising his voice, "that I'm going to back out and let somebody else in, I'm not. And that's flat."

"It's a life-and-death matter," said Tish.

"You bet it's a life-and-death matter."

"And--what about the--the red-headed man over there?"

His reply amazed us all. "He's harmless," he said. "I don't like him, naturally; but I admire the way he holds on. He's making the best of a bad business."

"Do you know why he's here?"

He looked uneasy for once.

"Well, I've got a theory," he replied; but, though his voice was calm, he changed color.

"Then perhaps you'll tell me what that signal means?"

Tish gave him the glasses and he saw the red flag. I have never seen a man look so unhappy.

"Holy cats!" he said, and almost dropped the glasses. "Why, he--he must be expecting somebody!"

"So I should imagine," Tish commented dryly. "He sent a letter by the boat to-day."

"The h--I he did!" And then: "That's ridiculous! You're mistaken. As a--as a matter of fact, I went over there the other night and commandeered his fountain pen."

So it had not fallen out of his pocket!

"I'll be frank, ladies," he said. "It's my object just now to keep that chap from writing letters. It doesn't matter why, but it's vital."

He was horribly cast down when we told him about Hutchins and the pen and ink.

"So that's it!" he said gloomily. "And the flag's a signal, of course. Ladies, you have done it out of the kindness of your hearts, I know; but I think you have wrecked my life."

He took a gloomy departure and left us all rather wrought up. Who were we, as Tish said, to imperil a fellow man? And another thing--if there was a reward on him, why should we give it to a red-haired detective, who was rude to harmless animals and ate canned corn for breakfast?

With her customary acumen Tish solved the difficulty that very evening.

"The simplest thing," she said, "of course, would be to go over during the night and take the flag away; but he may have more red handkerchiefs. Then, too, he seems to be a light sleeper, and it would be awkward to have him shoot at us."

She sat in thought for quite a while. Hutchins was watching the sunset, and seemed depressed and silent. Tish lowered her voice.

"There's no reason why we shouldn't have a red flag, too," she said. "It gives us an even chance to get in on whatever is about to happen. We can warn Mr. McDonald, for one thing, if any one comes here. Personally I think he is unjustly suspected."

[But Tish was to change her mind very soon.]

We made the flag that night, by lantern light, out of Tish's red silk petticoat. Hutchins was curious, I am sure; but we explained nothing. And we fastened it obliquely over the river, like the one on the other side.

Tish's change of heart, which occurred the next morning, was due to a most unfortunate accident that happened to her at nine o'clock. Hutchins, who could swim like a duck, was teaching Tish to swim, and she was learning nicely. Tish had put a life-preserver on, with a clothes-line fastened to it, and Aggie was sitting on the bank holding the rope while she went through the various gestures.

Having completed the lesson Hutchins went into the woods for red raspberries, leaving Tish still practicing in the water with Aggie holding the rope. Happening to sneeze, the line slipped out of her hand, and she had the agonizing experience of seeing Tish carried away by the current.

I was washing some clothing in the river a few yards down the stream when Tish came floating past. I shall never forget her expression or my own sense of absolute helplessness.

"Get the canoe," said Tish, "and follow. I'm heading for Island Eleven."

[Illustration: "Get the canoe and follow. I'm heading for Island Eleven"]

She was quite calm, though pale; but, in her anxiety to keep well above the water, she did what was almost a fatal thing--she pushed the life-preserver lower down round her body. And having shifted the floating center, so to speak, without warning her head disappeared and her feet rose in the air.

For a time it looked as though she would drown in that position; but Tish rarely loses her presence of mind. She said she knew at once what was wrong. So, though somewhat handicapped by the position, she replaced the cork belt under her arms and emerged at last.

Aggie had started back into the woods for Hutchins; but, with one thing and another, it was almost ten before they returned together. Tish by that time was only a dot on the horizon through the binocular, having missed Island Eleven, as she explained later, by the rope being caught on a submerged log, which deflected her course.

We got into the motor boat and followed her, and, except for a most unjust sense of irritation that I had not drowned myself by following her in the canoe, she was unharmed. We got her into the motor boat and into a blanket, and Aggie gave her some blackberry cordial at once. It was some time before her teeth ceased chattering so she could speak. When she did it was to announce that she had made a discovery.

"He's a spy, all right!" she said. "And that Indian is another. Neither

of them saw me as I floated past. They were on Island Eleven. Mr. McDonald wrote something and gave it to the Indian. It wasn't a letter or he'd have sent it by the boat. He didn't even put it in an envelope, so far as I could see. It's probably in cipher."

Well, we took her home, and she had a boiled egg at dinner.

The rest of us had fish. It is one of Tish's theories that fish should only be captured for food, and that all fish caught must be eaten. I do not know when I have seen fish come as easy. Perhaps it was the worms, which had grown both long and fat, so that one was too much for a hook; and we cut them with scissors, like tape or ribbon. Aggie and I finally got so sick of fish that while Tish's head was turned we dropped in our lines without bait. But, even at that, Aggie, reeling in her line to go home, caught a three-pound bass through the gills and could not shake it off.

We tried to persuade Tish to lie down that afternoon, but she refused.

"I'm not sick," she said, "even if you two idiots did try to drown me. And I'm on the track of something. If that was a letter, why didn't he send it by the boat?"

Just then her eye fell on the flagpole, and we followed her horrified gaze. The flag had been neatly cut away!

Tish's eyes narrowed. She looked positively dangerous; and within five minutes she had cut another flag out of the back breadth of the petticoat and flung it defiantly in the air. Who had cut away the signal--McDonald or the detective? We had planned to investigate the nameless lake that afternoon, Tish being like Colonel Roosevelt in her thirst for information, as well as in the grim pugnacity that is her dominant characteristic; but at the last minute she decided not to go.

"You and Aggie go, Lizzie," she said. "I've got something on hand."

"Tish!" Aggie wailed. "You'll drown yourself or something."

"Don't be a fool!" Tish snapped. "There's a portage, but you and Lizzie can carry the canoe across on your heads. I've seen pictures of it. It's easy. And keep your eyes open for a wireless outfit. There's one about, that's sure!"

"Lots of good it will do to keep our eyes open," I said with some bitterness, "with our heads inside the canoe!"

We finally started and Hutchins went with us. It was Hutchins, too, who voiced the way we all felt when we had crossed the river and were preparing for what she called the portage.

"She wants to get us out of the way, Miss Lizzie," she said. "Can you imagine what mischief she's up to?"

"That is not a polite way to speak of Miss Tish, Hutchins," I said coldly. Nevertheless, my heart sank.

Hutchins and I carried the canoe. It was a hot day and there was no path. Aggie, who likes a cup of hot tea at five o'clock, had brought along a bottle filled with tea, and a small basket containing sugar and cups.

Personally I never had less curiosity about a lake. As a matter of fact I wished there was no lake. Twice--being obliged, as it were, to walk blindly and the canoe being excessively heavy--I, who led the way, ran the front end of the thing against the trunk of a tree, and both Hutchins and I sat down violently, under the canoe as a result of the impact.

To add to the discomfort of the situation Aggie declared that we were being followed by a bear, and at the same instant stepped into a swamp up to her knees. She became calm at once, with the calmness of despair.

"Go and leave me, Lizzie!" she said. "He is just behind those bushes. I may sink before he gets me--that's one comfort."

Hutchins found a log and, standing on it, tried to pull her up; but she seemed firmly fastened. Aggie went quite white; and, almost beside myself, I poured her a cup of hot tea, which she drank. I remember she murmured Mr. Wiggins's name, and immediately after she yelled that the bear was coming.

It was, however, the detective who emerged from the bushes. He got Aggie out with one good heave, leaving both her shoes gone forever; and while she collapsed, whimpering, he folded his arms and stared at all of us angrily.

"What sort of damnable idiocy is this?" he demanded in a most unpleasant tone.

Aggie revived and sat upright.

"That's our affair, isn't it?" said Hutchins curtly.

"Not by a blamed sight!" was his astonishing reply.

"The next time I am sinking in a morass, let me sink," Aggie said, with simple dignity.

He did not speak another word, but gave each of us a glance of the most deadly contempt, and finished up with Hutchins.

"What I don't understand," he said furiously, "is why you have to lend yourself to this senile idiocy. Because some old women choose to sink themselves in a swamp is no reason why you should commit suicide!"

Aggie said afterward only the recollection that he had saved her life

prevented her emptying the tea on him. I should hardly have known Hutchins.

"Naturally," she said in a voice thick with fury, "you are in a position to insult these ladies, and you do. But I warn you, if you intend to keep on, this swamp is nothing. We like it here. We may stay for months. I hope you have your life insured."

Perhaps we should have understood it all then. Of course Charlie Sands, for whom I am writing this, will by this time, with his keen mind, comprehend it all; but I assure you we suspected nothing.

How simple, when you line it up: The country house and the garden hose; the detective, with no camp equipment; Mr. McDonald and the green canoe; the letter on the train; the red flag; the girl in the pink tam-o'-shanter--who has not yet appeared, but will shortly; Mr. McDonald's incriminating list--also not yet, but soon.

How inevitably they led to what Charlie Sands has called our crime!

The detective, who was evidently very strong, only glared at her. Then he swung the canoe up on his head and, turning about, started back the way we had come. Though Hutchins and Aggie were raging, I was resigned. My neck was stiff and my shoulders ached. We finished our tea in silence and then made our way back to the river.

I have now reached Tish's adventure. It is not my intention in this record to defend Tish. She thought her conclusions were correct. Charlie Sands says she is like Shaw--she has got a crooked point of view, but she believes she is seeing straight. And, after a while, if you look her way long enough you get a sort of mental astigmatism.

So I shall confess at once that, at the time, I saw nothing immoral in what she did that afternoon while we were having our adventure in the swamp.

I was putting cloths wrung out of arnica and hot water on my neck when she came home, and Hutchins was baking biscuit--she was a marvelous cook, though Aggie, who washed the dishes, objected to the number of pans she used.

Tish ignored both my neck and the biscuits, and, marching up the bank, got her shotgun from the tent and loaded it.

"We may be attacked at any time," she said briefly; and, getting the binocular, she searched the river with a splendid sweeping glance. "At any time. Hutchins, take these glasses, please, and watch that we are not disturbed."

"I'm baking biscuit, Miss Letitia."

"Biscuit!" said Tish scornfully. "Biscuit in times like these?"

She walked up to the camp stove and threw the oven door open; but, though I believe she had meant to fling them into the river, she changed her mind when she saw them.

"Open a jar of honey, Hutchins," she said, and closed the oven; but her voice was abstracted. "You can watch the river from the stove, Hutchins," she went on. "Miss Aggie and Miss Lizzie and I must confer together."

So we went into the tent, and Tish closed and fastened it.

"Now," she said, "I've got the papers."

"Papers?"

"The ones Mr. McDonald gave that Indian this morning. I had an idea he'd still have them. You can't hurry an Indian. I waited in the bushes until he went in swimming. Then I went through his pockets."

"Tish Carberry!" cried Aggie.

"These are not times to be squeamish," Tish said loftily. "I'm neutral; of course; but Great Britain has had this war forced on her and I'm going to see that she has a fair show. I've ordered all my stockings from the same shop in London, for twenty years, and squarer people never lived. Look at these--how innocent they look, until one knows!"

She produced two papers from inside her waist. I must confess that, at first glance, I saw nothing remarkable.

"The first one looks," said Tish, "like a grocery order. It's meant to look like that. It's relieved my mind of one thing--McDonald's got no wireless or he wouldn't be sending cipher messages by an Indian."

It was written on a page torn out of a pocket notebook and the page was ruled with an inch margin at the left. This was the document:--

- 1 Dozen eggs.
- 20 Yards fishing-line.
- 1 pkg. Needles--anything to sew a button on.
- 1 doz. A B C bass hooks.
- 3 lbs. Meat--anything so it isn't fish.
- 1 bot. Ink for fountain pen.
- 3 Tins sardines.
- 1 Extractor.

Well, I could not make anything of it; but, of course, I have not Tish's mind. Aggie was almost as bad.

"What's an extractor?" she asked.

"Exactly!" said Tish. "What is an extractor? Is the fellow going to pull

teeth? No! He needed an _e_; so he made up a word."

She ran her finger down the first letters of the second column. "D-y-n-a-m-i-t-e!" she said triumphantly. "Didn't I tell you?"

IV

Well, there it was--staring at us. I felt positively chilled. He looked so young and agreeable, and, as Aggie said, he had such nice teeth. And to know him for what he was--it was tragic! But that was not all.

"Add the numbers!" said Tish. "Thirty-one tons, perhaps, of dynamite! And that's only part," said Tish. "Here's the most damning thing of all--a note to his accomplice!"

"Damning" is here used in the sense of condemnatory. We are none of us addicted to profanity.

We read the other paper, which had been in a sealed envelope, but without superscription. It is before me as I write, and I am copying it exactly:--

I shall have to see you. I'm going crazy! Don't you realize that this is a matter of life and death to me? Come to Island Eleven to-night, won't you? And give me a chance to talk, anyhow. Something has got to be done and done soon. I'm desperate!

Aggie sneezed three times in sheer excitement; for anyone can see how absolutely incriminating the letter was. It was not signed, but it was in the same writing as the list.

Tish, who knows something about everything, said the writing denoted an unscrupulous and violent nature.

"The _y_ is especially vicious," she said. "I wouldn't trust a man who made a _y_ like that to carry a sick child to the doctor!"

The thing, of course, was to decide at once what measures to take. The boat would not come again for two days, and to send a letter by it to the town marshal or sheriff, or whatever the official is in Canada who takes charge of spies, would be another loss of time.

"Just one thing," said Tish. "I'll plan this out and find some way to deal with the wretch; but I wouldn't say anything to Hutchins. She's a nice little thing, though she is a fool about a motor boat. There's no case in scaring her."

For some reason or other, however, Hutchins was out of spirits that

night.

"I hope you're not sick, Hutchins?" said Tish.

"No, indeed, Miss Tish."

"You're not eating your fish."

"I'm sick of fish," she said calmly. "I've eaten so much fish that when I see a hook I have a mad desire to go and hang myself on it."

"Fish," said Tish grimly, "is good for the brain. I do not care to boast, but never has my mind been so clear as it is to-night."

Now certainly, though Tish's tone was severe, there was nothing in it to hurt the girl; but she got up from the cracker box on which she was sitting, with her eyes filled with tears.

"Don't mind me. I'm a silly fool," she said; and went down to the river and stood looking out over it.

It quite spoiled our evening. Aggie made her a hot lemonade and, I believe, talked to her about Mr. Wiggins, and how, when he was living, she had had fits of weeping without apparent cause. But if the girl was in love, as we surmised, she said nothing about it. She insisted that it was too much fish and nervous strain about the Mebbe.

"I never know," she said, "when we start out whether we're going to get back or be marooned and starve to death on some island."

Tish said afterward that her subconscious self must have taken the word "marooned" and played with it; for in ten minutes or so her plan popped into her head.

"Full-panoplied from the head of Jove," Lizzie," she said. "Really, it is not necessary to think if one only has faith. The supermind does it all without effort. I do not dislike the young man; but I must do my duty."

Tish's plan was simplicity itself. We were to steal his canoe.

"Then we'll have him," she finished. "The current's too strong there for him to swim to the mainland."

"He might try it and drown," Aggie objected. "Spy or no spy, he's somebody's son."

"War is no time to be chicken-hearted," Tish replied.

I confess I ate little all that day. At noon Mr. McDonald came and borrowed two eggs from us.

"I've sent over to a store across country, by my Indian guide,

philosopher, and friend," he said, "for some things I needed; but I dare say he's reading Byron somewhere and has forgotten it."

"Guide, philosopher, and friend!" I caught Tish's eye. McDonald had written the Updike letter! McDonald had meant to use our respectability to take him across the border!

We gave him the eggs, but Tish said afterward she was not deceived for a moment.

"The Indian has told him," she said, "and he's allaying our suspicions. Oh, he's clever enough! 'Know the Indian mind and my own!'" she quoted from the Updike letter. "'I know Canada thoroughly.' 'My object is not money.' I should think not!"

Tish stole the green canoe that night. She put on the life preserver and we tied the end of the rope that Aggie had let slip to the canoe. The life-preserver made it difficult to paddle, Tish said, but she felt more secure. If she struck a rock and upset, at least she would not drown; and we could start after her at dawn with the Mebbe.

"I'll be somewhere down the river," she said, "and safe enough, most likely, unless there are falls."

Hutchins watched in a puzzled way, for Tish did not leave until dusk.

"You'd better let me follow you with the launch, Miss Tish," she said. "Just remember that if the canoe sinks you're tied to it."

"I'm on serious business to-night, Hutchins," Tish said ominously. "You are young, and I refuse to trouble your young mind; but your ears are sharp. If you hear any shooting, get the boat and follow me."

The mention of shooting made me very nervous. We watched Tish as long as we could see her; then we returned to the tent, and Aggie and I crocheted by the hanging lantern. Two hours went by. At eleven o'clock Tish had not returned and Hutchins was in the motor boat, getting it ready to start.

"I like courage, Miss Lizzie," she said to me; "but this thing of elderly women, with some sort of bug, starting out at night in canoes is too strong for me. Either she's going to stay in at night or I'm going home."

"Elderly nothing!" I said, with some spirit. "She is in the prime of life. Please remember, Hutchins, that you are speaking of your employer. Miss Tish has no bug, as you call it."

"Oh, she's rational enough," Hutchins retorted: "but she is a woman of one idea and that sort of person is dangerous."

I was breathless at her audacity.

"Come now, Miss Lizzie," she said, "how can I help when I don't know what is being done? I've done my best up here to keep you comfortable and restrain Miss Tish's recklessness; but I ought to know something."

She was right; and, Tish or no Tish, then and there I told her. She was more than astonished. She sat in the motor boat, with a lantern at her feet, and listened.

"I see," she said slowly. "So the--so Mr. McDonald is a spy and has sent for dynamite to destroy the railroad! And--and the red-haired man is a detective! How do you know he is a detective?"

I told her then about the note we had picked up from beside her in the train, and because she was so much interested she really seemed quite thrilled. I brought the cipher grocery list and the other note down to her.

"It's quite convincing, isn't it?" she said. "And--and exciting! I don't know when I've been so excited."

She really was. Her cheeks were flushed. She looked exceedingly pretty.

"The thing to do," she said, "is to teach him a lesson. He's young. He mayn't always have had to stoop to such--such criminality. If we can scare him thoroughly, it might do him a lot of good."

I said I was afraid Tish took a more serious view of things and would notify the authorities. And at that moment there came two or three shots--then silence.

I shall never forget the ride after Tish and how we felt when we failed to find her; for there was no sign of her. The wind had come up, and, what with seeing Tish tied to that wretched canoe and sinking with it or shot through the head and lying dead in the bottom of it, we were about crazy. As we passed Island Eleven we could see the spy's camp-fire and his tent, but no living person.

At four in the morning we gave up and started back, heavy-hearted. What, therefore, was our surprise to find Tish sitting by the fire in her bathrobe, with a cup of tea in her lap and her feet in a foot-tub of hot water! Considering all we had gone through and that we had obeyed orders exactly, she was distinctly unjust. Indeed, at first she quite refused to speak to any of us.

"I do think, Tish," Aggie said as she stood shivering by the fire, "that you might at least explain where you have been. We have been going up and down the river for hours, burying you over and over."

Tish took a sip of tea, but said nothing.

"You said," I reminded her, "that if there was shooting, we were to start after you at once. When we heard the shots, we went, of course."

Tish leaned over and, taking the teakettle from the fire, poured more water into the foot-tub. Then at last she turned to speak.

"Bring some absorbent cotton and some bandages, Hutchins," she said. "I am bleeding from a hundred wounds. As for you"--she turned fiercely on Aggie and me--"the least you could have done was to be here when I returned, exhausted, injured, and weary; but, of course, you were gallivanting round the lake in an upholstered motor boat."

Here she poured more water into the foot-tub and made it much too hot. This thawed her rather, and she explained what was wrong. She was bruised, scratched to the knees, and with a bump the size of an egg on her forehead, where she had run into a tree.

The whole story was very exciting. It seems she got the green canoe without any difficulty, the spy being sound asleep in his tent; but about that time the wind came up and Tish said she could not make an inch of progress toward our camp.

The chewing gum with which we had repaired our canoe came out at that time and the boat began to fill, Tish being unable to sit over the leak and paddle at the same time. So, at last, she gave up and made for the mainland.

"The shooting," Tish said with difficulty, "was by men from the Indian camp firing at me. I landed below the camp, and was making my way as best I could through the woods when they heard me moving. I believe they thought it was a bear."

I think Tish was more afraid of the Indians, in spite of their sixty-three steel engravings and the rest of it, than she pretended, though she said she would have made herself known, but at that moment she fell over a fallen tree and for fifteen minutes was unable to speak a word. When at last she rose the excitement was over and they had gone back to their camp.

"Anyhow," she finished, "the green canoe is hidden a couple of miles down the river, and I guess Mr. McDonald is safe for a time. Lizzie, you can take a bath to-morrow safely."

Tish sat up most of the rest of the night composing a letter to the authorities of the town, telling them of Mr. McDonald and enclosing careful copies of the incriminating documents she had found.

During the following morning the river was very quiet. Through the binocular we were able to see Mr. McDonald standing on the shore of his island and looking intently in our direction, but naturally we paid no attention to him.

The red-haired man went in swimming that day and necessitated our retiring to the tent for an hour and a half; but at noon Aggie's naturally soft heart began to assert itself.

"Spy or no spy," she said to Tish, "we ought to feed him."

"Huh!" was Tish's rejoinder. "There is no sense in wasting good food on a man whose hours are numbered."

We were surprised, however, to find that Hutchins, who had detested Mr. McDonald, was rather on Aggie's side.

"The fact that he has but a few more hours," she said to Tish, "is an excellent reason for making those hours as little wretched as possible."

It was really due to Hutchins, therefore, that Mr. McDonald had a luncheon. The problem of how to get it to him was a troublesome one, but Tish solved it with her customary sagacity.

"We can make a raft," she said, "a small one, large enough to hold a tray. By stopping the launch some yards above the island we can float his luncheon to him quite safely."

That was the method we ultimately pursued and it worked most satisfactorily.

Hutchins baked hot biscuits; and, by putting a cover over the pan, we were enabled to get them to him before they cooled.

We prepared a really appetizing luncheon of hot biscuits, broiled ham, marmalade, and tea, adding, at Aggie's instructions, a jar of preserved peaches, which she herself had put up.

Tish made the raft while we prepared the food, and at exactly half-past twelve o'clock we left the house. Mr. McDonald saw us coming and was waiting smilingly at the upper end of the island.

"Great Scott!" he said. "I thought you were never going to hear me. Another hour and I'd have made a swim for it, though it's suicidal with this current. I'll show you where you can come in so you won't hit a rock."

Hutchins had stopped the engine of the motor boat and we threw out the anchor at a safe distance from the shore.

"We are not going to land," said Tish, "and I think you know perfectly well the reason why."

"Oh, now," he protested; "surely you are going to land! I've had an awfully uncomfortable accident--my canoe's gone."

"We know that," Tish said calmly. "As a matter of fact, we took it."

Mr. McDonald sat down suddenly on a log at the water's edge and looked at us.

"Oh!" he said.

"You may not believe it," Tish said, "but we know everything--your dastardly plot, who the red-haired man is, and all the destruction and wretchedness you are about to cause."

"Oh, I say!" he said feebly. "I wouldn't go as far as that. I'm--I'm not such a bad sort."

"That depends on the point of view," said Tish grimly.

Aggie touched her on the arm then and reminded her that the biscuits were getting cold; but Tish had a final word with him.

"Your correspondence has fallen into my hands, young man," she said, "and will be turned over to the proper authorities."

"It won't tell them anything they don't know," he said doggedly. "Look here, ladies: I am not ashamed of this thing. I--I am proud of it. I am perfectly willing to yell it out loud for everybody to hear. As a matter of fact, I think I will."

Mr. McDonald stood up suddenly and threw his head back; but here Hutchins, who had been silent, spoke for the first time.

"Don't be an idiot!" she said coldly. "We have something here for you to eat if you behave yourself."

He seemed to see her then for the first time, for he favored her with a long stare.

"Ah!" he said. "Then you are not entirely cold and heartless?"

She made no reply to this, being busy in assisting Aggie to lower the raft over the side of the boat.

"Broiled ham, tea, hot biscuits, and marmalade," said Aggie gently. "My poor fellow, we are doing what we consider our duty; but we want you to know that it is hard for us--very hard."

When he saw our plan, Mr. McDonald's face fell; but he stepped out into the water up to his knees and caught the raft as it floated down.

Before he said "Thank you" he lifted the cover of the pan and saw the hot biscuits underneath.

"Really," he said, "it's very decent of you. I sent off a grocery order yesterday, but nothing has come."

Tish had got Hutchins to start the engine by that time and we were moving away. He stood there, up to his knees in water, holding the tray and looking after us. He was really a pathetic figure, especially in view of the awful fate we felt was overtaking him.

He called something after us. On account of the noise of the engine, we could not be certain, but we all heard it the same way.

"Send for the whole d--d outfit!" was the way it sounded to us. "It won't make any difference to me."

V

The last thing I recall of Mr. McDonald that day is seeing him standing there in the water, holding the tray, with the teapot steaming under his nose, and gazing after us with an air of bewilderment that did not deceive us at all.

As I look back, there is only one thing we might have noticed at the time. This was the fact that Hutchins, having started the engine, was sitting beside it on the floor of the boat and laughing in the cruelest possible manner. As I said to Aggie at the time: "A spy is a spy and entitled to punishment if discovered; but no young woman should laugh over so desperate a situation."

I come now to the denouement of this exciting period. It had been Tish's theory that the red-haired man should not be taken into our confidence. If there was a reward for the capture of the spy, we ourselves intended to have it.

The steamer was due the next day but one. Tish was in favor of not waiting, but of at once going in the motor boat to the town, some thirty miles away, and telling of our capture; but Hutchins claimed there was not sufficient gasoline for such an excursion. That afternoon we went in the motor launch to where Tish had hidden the green canoe and, with a hatchet, rendered it useless.

The workings of the subconscious mind are marvelous. In the midst of chopping, Tish suddenly looked up.

"Have you noticed," she said, "that the detective is always watching our camp?"

"That's all he has to do," Aggie suggested.

"Stuff and nonsense! Didn't he follow you into the swamp? Does Hutchins ever go out in the canoe that he doesn't go out also? I'll tell you what has happened: She's young and pretty, and he's fallen in love with her."

I must say it sounded reasonable. He never bothered about the motor boat, but the instant she took the canoe and started out he was hovering somewhere near.

"She's noticed it," Tish went on. "That's what she was quarreling about

with him yesterday."

"How are we to know," said Aggie, who was gathering up the scraps of the green canoe and building a fire under them--"how are we to know they are not old friends, meeting thus in the wilderness? Fate plays strange tricks, Tish. I lived in the same street with Mr. Wiggins for years, and never knew him until one day when my umbrella turned wrong side out in a gust of wind."

"Fate fiddlesticks!" said Tish. "There's no such thing as fate in affairs of this sort. It's all instinct--the instinct of the race to continue itself."

This Aggie regarded as indelicate and she was rather cool to Tish the balance of the day.

Our prisoner spent most of the day at the end of the island toward us, sitting quietly, as we could see through the glasses. We watched carefully, fearing at any time to see the Indian paddling toward him.

[Tish was undecided what to do in such an emergency, except to intercept him and explain, threatening him also with having attempted to carry the incriminating papers. As it happened, however, the entire camp had gone for a two-days' deer hunt, and before they returned the whole thing had come to its surprising end.]

Late in the afternoon Tish put her theory of the red-haired man to the test.

"Hutchins," she said, "Miss Lizzie and I will cook the dinner if you want to go in the canoe to Harvey's Bay for water-lilies."

Hutchins at once said she did not care a rap for water-lilies; but, seeing a determined glint in Tish's eye, she added that she would go for frogs if Tish wanted her out of the way.

"Don't talk like a child!" Tish retorted. "Who said I wanted you out of the way?"

It is absolutely true that the moment Hutchins put her foot into the canoe the red-haired man put down his fishing-rod and rose. And she had not taken three strokes with the paddle before he was in the blue canoe.

Hutchins saw him just then and scowled. The last we saw of her she was moving rapidly up the river and the detective was dropping slowly behind. They both disappeared finally into the bay and Tish drew a long breath.

"Typical!" she said curtly. "He's sent here to watch a dangerous man and spends his time pursuing the young woman who hates the sight of him. When women achieve the suffrage they will put none but married men in positions of trust."

Hutchins and the detective were still out of sight when supper-time came. The spy's supper weighed on us, and at last Tish attempted to start the motor launch. We had placed the supper and the small raft aboard, and Aggie was leaning over the edge untying the painter,--not a man, but a rope,--when unexpectedly the engine started at the first revolution of the wheel.

It darted out to the length of the rope, where it was checked abruptly, the shock throwing Aggie entirely out and into the stream. Tish caught the knife from the supper tray to cut us loose, and while Tish cut I pulled Aggie in, wet as she was. The boat was straining and panting, and, on being released, it sprang forward like a dog unleashed.

Aggie had swallowed a great deal of water and was most disagreeable; but the Mebbe was going remarkably well, and there seemed to be every prospect that we should get back to the camp in good order. Alas, for human hopes! Mr. McDonald was not very agreeable.

"You know," he said as he waited for his supper to float within reach, "you needn't be so blamed radical about everything you do! If you object to my hanging round, why not just say so? If I'm too obnoxious I'll clear out."

"Obnoxious is hardly the word," said Tish. "How long am I to be a prisoner?"

"I shall send letters off by the first boat."

He caught the raft just then and examined the supper with interest.

"Of course things might be worse," he said; "but it's dirty treatment, anyhow. And it's darned humiliating. Somebody I know is having a good time at my expense. It's heartless! That's what it is--heartless!"

Well, we left him, the engine starting nicely and Aggie being wrapped in a tarpaulin; but about a hundred yards above the island it began to slow down, and shortly afterward it stopped altogether. As the current caught us, we luckily threw out the anchor, for the engine refused to start again. It was then we saw the other canoes.

The girl in the pink tam-o'-shanter was in the first one.

They glanced at us curiously as they passed, and the P.T.S.--that is the way we grew to speak of the pink tam-o'-shanter--raised one hand in the air, which is a form of canoe greeting, probably less upsetting to the equilibrium than a vigorous waving of the arm.

It was just then, I believe, that they saw our camp and headed for it. The rest of what happened is most amazing. They stopped at our landing and unloaded their canoes. Though twilight was falling, we could see them distinctly. And what we saw was that they calmly took possession of the camp.

"Good gracious!" Tish cried. "The girls have gone into the tent! And somebody's working at the stove. The impertinence!"

Our situation was acutely painful. We could do nothing but watch. We called, but our voices failed to reach them. And Aggie took a chill, partly cold and partly fury. We sat there while they ate the entire supper!

They were having a very good time. Now and then somebody would go into the tent and bring something out, and there would be shrieks of laughter.

[We learned afterward that part of the amusement was caused by Aggie's false front, which one of the wretches put on as a beard.]

It was while thus distracted that Aggie suddenly screamed, and a moment later Mr. McDonald climbed over the side and into the boat, dripping.

"Don't be alarmed!" he said. "I'll go back and be a prisoner again just as soon as I've fired the engine. I couldn't bear to think of the lady who fell in sitting here indefinitely and taking cold." He was examining the engine while he spoke. "Have visitors, I see," he observed, as calmly as though he were not dripping all over the place.

"Intruders, not visitors!" Tish said angrily. "I never saw them before."

"Rather pretty, the one with the pink cap. May I examine the gasoline supply?" There was no gasoline. He shrugged his shoulders. "I'm afraid no amount of mechanical genius I intended to offer you will start her," he said; "but the young lady--Hutchins is her name, I believe?--will see you here and come after you, of course."

Well, there was no denying that, spy or no spy, his presence was a comfort. He offered to swim back to the island and be a prisoner again, but Tish said magnanimously that there was no hurry. On Aggie's offering half of her tarpaulin against the wind, which had risen, he accepted.

"Your Miss Hutchins is reckless, isn't she?" he said when he was comfortably settled. "She's a strong swimmer; but a canoe is uncertain at the best."

"She's in no danger," said Tish. "She has a devoted admirer watching out for her."

"The deuce she has!" His voice was quite interested. "Why, who on earth--"

"Your detective," said Aggie softly. "He's quite mad about her. The way he follows her and the way he looks at her--it's thrilling!"

Mr. McDonald said nothing for quite a while. The canoe party had evidently eaten everything they could find, and somebody had brought out a banjo and was playing.

Tish, unable to vent her anger, suddenly turned on Mr. McDonald. "If you think," she said, "that the grocery list fooled us, it didn't!"

"Grocery list?"

"That's what I said."

"How did you get my grocery list?"

So she told him, and how she had deciphered it, and how the word "dynamite" had only confirmed her early suspicions.

His only comment was to say, "Good Heavens!" in a smothered voice.

"It was the extractor that made me suspicious," she finished. "What were you going to extract? Teeth?"

"And so, when my Indian was swimming, you went through his things! It's the most astounding thing I ever--My dear lady, an extractor is used to get the hooks out of fish. It was no cipher, I assure you. I needed an extractor and I ordered it. The cipher you speak of is only a remarkable coincidence."

"Huh!" said Tish. "And the paper you dropped in the train--was that a coincidence?"

"That's not my secret," he said, and turned sulky at once.

"Don't tell me," Tish said triumphantly, "that any young man comes here absolutely alone without a purpose!"

"I had a purpose, all right; but it was not to blow up a railroad train."

Apparently he thought he had said too much, for he relapsed into silence after that, with an occasional muttering.

It was eight o'clock when Hutchins's canoe came into sight. She was paddling easily, but the detective was far behind and moving slowly.

She saw the camp with its uninvited guests, and then she saw us. The detective, however, showed no curiosity; and we could see that he made for his landing and stumbled exhaustedly up the bank. Hutchins drew up beside us. "He'll not try that again, I think," she said in her crisp voice. "He's out of training. He panted like a motor launch. Who are our visitors?"

Here her eyes fell on Mr. McDonald and her face set in the dusk.

"You'll have to go back and get some gasoline, Hutchins."

"What made you start out without looking?"

"And send the vandals away. If they wait until I arrive, I'll be likely to do them some harm. I have never been so outraged."

"Let me go for gasoline in the canoe," said Mr. McDonald. He leaned over the thwart and addressed Hutchins. "You're worn out," he said. "I promise to come back and be a perfectly well-behaved prisoner again."

"Thanks, no."

"I'm wet. The exercise will warm me."

"Is it possible," she said in a withering tone that was lost on us at the time, "that you brought no dumb-bells with you?"

If we had had any doubts they should have been settled then; but we never suspected. It is incredible, looking back.

The dusk was falling and I am not certain of what followed. It was, however, something like this: Mr. McDonald muttered something angrily and made a motion to get into the canoe. Hutchins replied that she would not have help from him if she died for it. The next thing we knew she was in the launch and the canoe was floating off on the current. Aggie squealed; and Mr. McDonald, instead of swimming after the thing, merely folded his arms and looked at it.

"You know," he said to Hutchins, "you have so unpleasant a disposition that somebody we both know of is better off than he thinks he is!"

Tish's fury knew no bounds, for there we were marooned and two of us wet to the skin. I must say for Hutchins, however, that when she learned about Aggie she was bitterly repentant, and insisted on putting her own sweater on her. But there we were and there we should likely stay.

It was quite dark by that time, and we sat in the launch, rocking gently. The canoeing party had lighted a large fire on the beach, using the driftwood we had so painfully accumulated.

We sat in silence, except that Tish, who was watching our camp, said once bitterly that she was glad there were three beds in the tent. The girls of the canoeing party would be comfortable.

After a time Tish turned on Mr. McDonald sharply. "Since you claim to be no spy," she said, "perhaps you will tell us what brings you alone to this place? Don't tell me it's fish--I've seen you reading, with a line out. You're no fisherman."

He hesitated. "No," he admitted. "I'll be frank, Miss Carberry. I did not come to fish."

"What brought you?"

"Love," he said, in a low tone. "I don't expect you to believe me, but

it's the honest truth."

"Love!" Tish scoffed.

"Perhaps I'd better tell you the story," he said. "It's long and--and rather sad."

"Love stories," Hutchins put in coldly, "are terribly stupid, except to those concerned."

"That," he retorted, "is because you have never been in love. You are young and--you will pardon the liberty?--attractive; but you are totally prosaic and unromantic."

"Indeed!" she said, and relapsed into silence.

"These other ladies," Mr. McDonald went on, "will understand the strangeness of my situation when I explain that the--the young lady I care for is very near; is, in fact, within sight."

"Good gracious!" said Aggie. "Where?"

"It is a long story, but it may help to while away the long night hours; for I dare say we are here for the night. Did any one happen to notice the young lady in the first canoe, in the pink tam-o'-shanter?"

We said we had--all except Hutchins, who, of course, had not seen her. Mr. McDonald got a wet cigarette from his pocket and, finding a box of matches on the seat, made an attempt to dry it over the flames; so his story was told in the flickering light of one match after another.

VI

"I am," Mr. McDonald said, as the cigarette steamed, "the son of poor but honest parents. All my life I have been obliged to labor. You may say that my English is surprisingly pure, under such conditions. As a matter of fact, I educated myself at night, using a lantern in the top of my father's stable."

"I thought you said he was poor," Hutchins put in nastily. "How did he have a stable?"

"He kept a livery stable. Any points that are not clear I will explain afterward. Once the thread of a narrative is broken, it is difficult to resume, Miss Hutchins. Near us, in a large house, lived the lady of my heart."

"The pink tam-o'-shanter girl!" said Aggie. "I begin to understand."

"But," he added, "near us also lived a red-headed boy. She liked him very much, and even in the long-ago days I was fiercely jealous of him. It may surprise you to know that in those days I longed--fairly longed--for red hair and a red mustache."

"I hate to interrupt," said Hutchins; "but did he have a mustache as a boy?"

He ignored her. "We three grew up together. The girl is beautiful--you've probably noticed that--and amiable. The one thing I admire in a young woman is amiability. It would not, for instance, have occurred to her to isolate an entire party on the bosom of a northern and treacherous river out of pure temper."

"To think," said Aggie softly, "that she is just over there by the camp-fire! Don't you suppose, if she loves you, she senses your nearness?"

"That's it exactly," he replied in a gloomy voice, "if she loves me! But does she? In other words, has she come up the river to meet me or to meet my rival? She knows we are here. Both of us have written her. The presence of one or the other of us is the real reason for this excursion of hers. But again the question is--which?"

Here the match he was holding under the cigarette burned his fingers and he flung it overboard with a violent gesture.

"The detective, of course," said Tish. "I knew it from the beginning of your story."

"The detective," he assented. "You see his very profession attracts. There's an element of romance in it. I myself have kept on with my father and now run the--er--livery stable. My business is a handicap from a romantic point of view."

"I am aware," Mr. McDonald went on, "that it is not customary to speak so frankly of affairs of this sort; but I have two reasons. It hurts me to rest under unjust suspicion. I am no spy, ladies. And the second reason is even stronger. Consider my desperate position: In the morning my rival will see her; he will paddle his canoe to the great rock below your camp and sing his love song from the water. In the morning I shall sit here helpless--ill, possibly--and see all that I value in life slip out of my grasp. And all through no fault of my own! Things are so evenly balanced, so little will shift the weight of her favor, that frankly the first one to reach her will get her."

I confess I was thrilled. And even Tish was touched; but she covered her emotion with hard common sense.

"What's her name?" she demanded.

"Considering my frankness I must withhold that. Why not simply refer to her as the pink tam-o'-shanter--or, better still and more briefly, the

P.T.S.? That may stand for pink tam-o'-shanter, or the Person That Smiles,--she smiles a great deal,--or--or almost anything."

"It also stands," said Hutchins, with a sniff, "for Pretty Tall Story."

Tish considered her skepticism unworthy in one so young, and told her so; on which she relapsed into a sulky silence.

In view of what we knew, the bonfire at our camp and the small figure across the river took on a new significance.

As Aggie said, to think of the red-haired man sleeping calmly while his lady love was so near and his rival, so to speak, _hors de combat!_ Shortly after finishing his story, Mr. McDonald went to the stern of the boat and lifted the anchor rope.

"It is possible," he said, "that the current will carry us to my island with a little judicious management. Even though we miss it, we'll hardly be worse off than we are."

It was surprising we had not thought of it before, for the plan succeeded admirably. By moving a few feet at a time and then anchoring, we made slow but safe progress, and at last touched shore. We got out, and Mr. McDonald built a large fire, near which we put Aggie to steam. His supper, which he had not had time to eat, he generously divided, and we heated the tea. Hutchins, however, refused to eat.

Warmth and food restored Tish's mind to its usual keenness. I recall now the admiration in Mr. McDonald's eyes when she suddenly put down the sandwich she was eating and exclaimed:--

"The flags, of course! He told her to watch for a red flag as she came up the river; so when the party saw ours they landed. Perhaps they still think it is his camp and that he is away overnight."

"That's it, exactly," he said. "Think of the poor wretch's excitement when he saw your flag!"

Still, on looking back, it seems curious that we overlooked the way the red-headed man had followed Hutchins about. True, men are polygamous animals, Tish says, and are quite capable of following one woman about while they are sincerely in love with somebody else. But, when you think of it, the detective had apparently followed Hutchins from the start, and had gone into the wilderness to be near her, with only a suitcase and a mackintosh coat; which looked like a mad infatuation.

[Tish says she thought of this at the time, and that; from what she had seen of the P.T.S., Hutchins was much prettier. But she says she decided that men often love one quality in one girl and another in another; that he probably loved Hutchins's beauty and the amiability of the P.T.S. Also, she says, she reflected that the polygamy of the Far East is probably due to this tendency in the male more than to a preponderance of women.]

Tish called me aside while Mr. McDonald was gathering firewood. "I'm a fool and a guilty woman, Lizzie," she said. "Because of an unjust suspicion I have possibly wrecked this poor boy's life."

I tried to soothe her. "They might have been wretchedly unhappy together, Tish," I said; "and, anyhow, I doubt whether he is able to support a wife. There's nothing much in keeping a livery stable nowadays."

"There's only one thing that still puzzles me," Tish observed: "granting that the grocery order was a grocery order, what about the note?"

We might have followed this line of thought, and saved what occurred later, but that a new idea suddenly struck Tish. She is curious in that way; her mind works very rapidly at times, and because I cannot take her mental hurdles, so to speak, she is often impatient.

"Lizzie," she said suddenly, "did you notice that when the anchor was lifted, we drifted directly to this island? Don't stare at me like that. Use your wits."

When I failed instantly to understand, however, she turned abruptly and left me, disappearing in the shadows.

For the next hour nothing happened. Tish was not in sight and Aggie slept by the fire. Hutchins sat with her chin cupped in her hands, and Mr. McDonald gathered driftwood.

Hutchins only spoke once. "I'm awfully sorry about the canoe, Miss Lizzie," she said; "it was silly and--and selfish. I don't always act like a bad child. The truth is, I'm rather upset and nervous. I hate to be thwarted--I'm sorry I can't explain any further."

I was magnanimous. "I'm sure, until to-night, you've been perfectly satisfactory," I said; "but it seems extraordinary that you should dislike men the way you do."

She only eyed me searchingly.

It is my evening custom to prepare for the night by taking my switch off and combing and braiding my hair; so, as we seemed to be settled for the night, I asked Mr. McDonald whether the camp afforded an extra comb. He brought out a traveling-case at once from the tent and opened it.

"Here's a comb," he said. "I never use one. I'm sorry this is all I can supply."

My eyes were glued to the case. It was an English traveling-case, with gold-mounted fittings. He saw me staring at it and changed color.

"Nice bag, isn't it?" he said. "It was a gift, of course. The--the livery stable doesn't run much to this sort of thing."

But the fine edge of suspicion had crept into my mind again.

* * * * *

Tish did not return to the fire for some time. Before she came back we were all thoroughly alarmed. The island was small, and a short search convinced us that she was not on it!

We wakened Aggie and told her, and the situation was very painful. The launch was where we had left it. Mr. McDonald looked more and more uneasy.

"My sane mind tells me she's perfectly safe," he said. "I don't know that I've ever met a person more able to take care of herself; but it's darned odd--that's all I can say."

Just as he spoke a volley of shots sounded from up the river near our camp, two close together and then one; and somebody screamed.

It was very dark. We could see lanterns flashing at our camp and somebody was yelling hoarsely. One lantern seemed to run up and down the beach in mad excitement, and then, out of the far-off din, Aggie, whose ears are sharp, suddenly heard the splash of a canoe paddle.

I shall tell Tish's story of what happened as she told it to Charlie Sands two weeks or so later.

"It is perfectly simple," she said, "and it's stupid to make such a fuss over it. Don't talk to me about breaking the law! The girl came; I didn't steal her."

Charlie Sands, I remember, interrupted at that moment to remind her that she had shot a hole in the detective's canoe; but this only irritated her.

"Certainly I did," she snapped; "but it's perfectly idiotic of him to say that it took off the heel of his shoe. In that stony country it's always easy to lose a heel."

But to return to Tish's story:--

"It occurred to me," she said, "that, if the launch had drifted to Mr. McDonald's island, the canoe might have done so too; so I took a look round. I'd been pretty much worried about having called the boy a spy when he wasn't, and it worried me to think that he couldn't get away from the place. I never liked the red-haired man. He was cruel to Aggie's cat--but we've told you that.

"I knew that in the morning the detective would see the P.T.S., as we called her, and he could get over and propose before breakfast. But when I found the canoe--yes, I found it--I didn't intend to do anything more than steal the detective's boat."

"Is that all?" said Charlie Sands sarcastically. "You disappoint me, Aunt Letitia! With all the chances you had--to burn his pitiful little tent, for instance, or steal his suitcase--"

"But on my way," Tish went on with simple dignity, "it occurred to me that I could move things a step farther by taking the girl to Mr. McDonald and letting him have his chance right away. Things went well from the start, for she was standing alone, looking out over the river. It was dark, except for the starlight, and I didn't know it was she. I beached the canoe and she squealed a little when I spoke to her."

"Just what," broke in Charlie Sands, "does one say under such circumstances? Sometime I may wish to abduct a young woman and it is well to be prepared."

"I told her the young man she had expected was on Island Eleven and had sent me to get her. She was awfully excited. She said they'd seen his signal, but nothing of him. And when they'd found a number of feminine things round they all felt a little--well, you can understand. She went back to get a coat, and while she was gone I untied the canoes and pushed them out into the river. I'm thorough, and I wasn't going to have a lot of people interfering before we got things fixed."

It was here, I think, that Charlie Sands gave a low moan and collapsed on the sofa. "Certainly!" he said in a stifled voice. "I believe in being thorough. And, of course, a few canoes more or less do not matter."

"Later," Tish said, "I knew I'd been thoughtless about the canoes; but, of course, it was too late then."

"And when was it that you assaulted the detective?"

"He fired first," said Tish. "I never felt more peaceable in my life. It's absurd for him to say that he was watching our camp, as he had every night we'd been there. Who asked him to guard us? And the idea of his saying he thought we were Indians stealing things, and that he fired into the air! The bullets sang past me. I had hardly time to get my revolver out of my stocking."

"And then?" asked Charlie Sands.

"And then," said Tish, "we went calmly down the river to Island Eleven. We went rapidly, for at first the detective did not know I had shot a hole in his canoe, and he followed us. It stands to reason that if I'd shot his heel off he'd have known there was a hole in the boat. Luckily the girl was in the bottom of the canoe when she fainted or we might have been upset."

It was at this point, I believe, that Charlie Sands got his hat and opened the door.

"I find," he said, "that I cannot stand any more at present, Aunt Tish. I shall return when I am stronger."

* * * *

So I shall go back to my own narrative. Really my justification is almost complete. Any one reading to this point will realize the injustice of the things that have been said about us.

We were despairing of Tish, as I have said, when we heard the shots and then the approach of a canoe. Then Tish hailed us.

"Quick, somebody!" she said. "I have a cramp in my right leg."

[The canoeing position, kneeling as one must, had been always very trying for her. She frequently developed cramps, which only a hot footbath relieved.]

Mr. McDonald waded out into the water. Our beach fire illuminated the whole scene distinctly, and when he saw the P.T.S. huddled in the canoe he stopped as though he had been shot.

"How interesting!" said Hutchins from the bank, in her cool voice.

I remember yet Tish, stamping round on her cramped limb and smiling benevolently at all of us. The girl, however, looked startled and unhappy, and a little dizzy. Hutchins helped her to a fallen tree.

"Where--where is he?" said the P.T.S.

Tish stared at her. "Bless the girl!" she said. "Did you think I meant the other one?"

"I--What other one?"

Tish put her hand on Mr. McDonald's arm. "My dear girl," she said, "this young man adores you. He's all that a girl ought to want in the man she loves. I have done him a grave injustice and he has borne it nobly. Come now--let me put your hand in his and say you will marry him."

"Marry him!" said the P.T.S. "Why, I never saw him in my life before!"

We had been so occupied with this astounding scene that none of us had noticed the arrival of the detective. He limped rapidly up the bank--having lost his heel, as I have explained--and, dripping with water, confronted us. When a red-haired person is pale, he is very pale. And his teeth showed.

He ignored all of us but the P.T.S., who turned and saw him, and went straight into his arms in the most unmaidenly fashion.

"By Heaven," he said, "I thought that elderly lunatic had taken you off and killed you!"

He kissed her quite frantically before all of us; and then, with one arm round her, he confronted Tish.

"I'm through!" he said. "I'm done! There isn't a salary in the world that will make me stay within gunshot of you another day." He eyed her fiercely. "You are a dangerous woman, madam," he said. "I'm going to bring a charge against you for abduction and assault with intent to kill. And if there's any proof needed I'll show my canoe, full of water to the gunwale."

Here he kissed the girl again.

"You--you know her?" gasped Mr. McDonald, and dropped on a tree-trunk, as though he were too weak to stand.

"It looks like it, doesn't it?"

Here I happened to glance at Hutchins, and she was convulsed with mirth! Tish saw her, too, and glared at her; but she seemed to get worse. Then, without the slightest warning, she walked round the camp-fire and kissed Mr. McDonald solemnly on the top of his head.

"I give it up!" she said. "Somebody will have to marry you and take care of you. I'd better be the person."

* * * * *

"But why was the detective watching Hutchins?" said Charlie Sands. "Was it because he had heard of my Aunt Letitia's reckless nature? I am still bewildered."

"You remember the night we got the worms?"

"I see. The detective was watching all of you because you stole the worms."

"Stole nothing!" Tish snapped. "That's the girl's house. She's the Miss Newcomb you read about in the papers. Now do you understand?"

"Certainly I do. She was a fugitive from justice because the cat found dynamite in the woods. Or--perhaps I'm a trifle confused, but--Now I have it! She had stolen a gold-mounted traveling-bag and given it to McDonald. Lucky chap! I was crazy about Hutchins myself. You might tip her the word that I'm badly off for a traveling-case myself. But what about the P.T.S.? How did she happen on the scene?"

"She was engaged to the detective, and she was camping down the river. He had sent her word where he was. The red flag was to help her find him."

Tish knows Charlie Sands, so she let him talk. Then:--

"Mr. McDonald was too wealthy, Charlie," she said; "so when she wanted him to work and be useful, and he refused, she ran off and got a situation herself to teach him a lesson. She could drive a car. But her people heard about it, and that wretched detective was responsible for her safety. That's why he followed her about."

"I should like to follow her about myself," said Charlie Sands. "Do you think she's unalterably decided to take McDonald, money and all? He's still an idler. Lend me your car, Aunt Tish. There's a theory there; and--who knows?"

"He is going to work for six months before she marries him," Tish said. "He seems to like to work, now he has started."

She rang the bell and Hannah came to the door.

"Hannah," said Tish calmly, "call up the garage and tell McDonald to bring the car round. Mr. Sands is going out."